

RUPEE SERIES



BHAVAN'S BOOK UNIVERSITY

**PAGEANT
OF GREAT LIVES**

SERIES II

GENERAL EDITORS

K. M. MUNSHI

R. R. DIWAKAR



BHARATIYA VIDYA BHAVAN BOMBAY



What Bharatiya Vidya Stands for

Bharatiya Shiksha must ensure that no promising young Indian of character having faith in Bharat and her culture Bharatiya Vidya should be left without modern educational equipment by reason merely of want of funds.

2. Bharatiya Shiksha must be formative more than informative, and cannot have for its end mere acquisition of knowledge. Its legitimate sphere is not only to develop natural talents but so to shape them as to enable them to absorb and express the permanent values of Bharatiya Vidya.

3. Bharatiya Shiksha must take into account not only the full growth of a student's personality but the totality of his relations and lead him to the highest self-fulfilment of which he is capable.

4. Bharatiya Shiksha must involve at some stage or other an intensive study of Sanskrit or Sanskritic languages and their literature, without excluding, if so desired, the study of other languages and literature, ancient and modern.

5. The re-integration of Bharatiya Vidya, which is the primary object of Bharatiya Shiksha, can only be attained through a study of forces, movements, motives, idgas, forms and art of creative life-energy through which it has expressed itself in different ages as a single continuous process.

6. Bharatiya Shiksha must stimulate the student's power of expression, both written and oral, at every stage in accordance with the highest ideals attained by the great literary masters in the intellectual and moral spheres.

7. The technique of Bharatiya Shiksha must involve—

(a) the adoption by the teacher of the *Guru* attitude which consists in taking a personal interest in the student; inspiring and encouraging him to achieve distinction in his studies; entering into his life with a view to form ideals and remove psychological obstacles; and creating in him a spirit of consecration; and

(b) the adoption by the student of the *Shishya* attitude by the development of—

(i) respect for the teacher,

(ii) a spirit of inquiry,

(iii) a spirit of service towards the teacher, the institution, Bharat and Bharatiya Vidya.

8. The ultimate aim of Bharatiya Shiksha is to teach the younger generation to appreciate and live up to the permanent values of Bharatiya Vidya which flowing from the supreme art of creative life-energy as represented by Shri Ramachandra, Shri Krishna, Vyasa, Buddha and Mahavira have expressed themselves in modern times in the life of Shri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Swami Dayananda Saraswati, and Swami Vivekananda, Shri Aurobindo and Mahatma Gandhi.

9. Bharatiya Shiksha while equipping the student with every kind of scientific and technical training must teach the student, not to sacrifice an ancient form or attitude to an unreasoning passion for change; not to retain a form or attitude which in the light of modern times can be replaced by another form or attitude which is a truer and more effective expression of the spirit of Bharatiya Vidya; and to capture the spirit afresh for each generation to present it to the world



आ नो भद्राः क्रतवो यन्तु विश्वतः ।

Let noble thoughts come to us from every side

—Rigveda, I-89-i

BHAVAN'S BOOK UNIVERSITY

RUPEE SERIES

General Editors

K. M. MUNSHI

R. R. DIWAKAR

27

PAGEANT OF GREAT LIVES

SERIES II

BHAVAN'S BOOK UNIVERSITY

Organising Committee:

LILAVATI MUNSHI—*Chairman*

K. K. BIRLA

S. G. NEVATIA

J. H. DAVE

S. RAMAKRISHNAN

BHAVAN'S BOOK UNIVERSITY

PAGEANT OF GREAT LIVES
SERIES II



1964

BHARATIYA VIDYA BHAVAN
CHOWPATTY : BOMBAY

All Rights Reserved

First Edition, December 1964

Price Re. 1.00; Sh. 1|9; \$ 0.50

PRINTED IN INDIA

By P. H. Raman at Associated Advertisers & Printers, 505, Tardeo
Arthur Road, Bombay-34, and Published by S. Ramakrishnan,
Executive Secretary, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay-7.

GENERAL EDITOR'S PREFACE

The Bhavan's Book University volumes had rare success. About a million and a quarter volumes have been sold in about eleven years. However, there is an insistent demand for the stray volumes which the Bhavan has issued from time to time at a lower price. In order to meet this demand, it has been decided to issue the new One-Rupee Book University Series side by side with the Book University Series.

I hope this new One-Rupee Series will have the same good fortune which the other Series had, of being useful to those who are interested in the fundamental values of Indian Culture, and of reaching out to a wider audience.

Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan,
Chowpatty Road, Bombay-7.
Vijaya Dashami
September 28, 1963

K. M. MUNSHI

PUBLISHERS' NOTE

It may not be given to every one to leave behind when he quits the world footprints on the sands of time; but surely a study of the lives of great men will certainly serve to remind him that he too can make his life sublime. Among the formative influences on a man's life, by far the most important is *Satsanga*, association with *mahapurushas* who were great in their goodness, and good in their greatness. While their contemporaries have been fortunate in their personal contact with such personages, posterity has to content itself with reading what has been said of them and what they themselves have said.

Such *mahapurushas* have never been in short supply through the centuries in every part of the world. They are a Pageant of the Divine, the Procession of the True, the Good and the Beautiful. They came to comfort, to counsel, to warn and to guide in every human crisis in fulfilment, each in his time, in his way suited to each particular occasion of God's promise to incarnate to remedy the moral and spiritual imbalance whenever it occurs and disrupts the Order of the Cosmos.

Brief accounts of the lives of some of these immortal benefactors of mankind were serialised in the *Bhavan's Journal* and are now gathered together in this and its companion volumes. The

Pageant starts with Zarathustra, travels along many lands through long stretches of time and ends in this series with Sarojini Naidu.

The reader is invited to the company of this illustrious galaxy of the Great Personages of the world and to come into the rich heritage of noble thoughts and high endeavour that they symbolised in themselves.

CONTENTS

	Page
GENERAL EDITOR'S PREFACE	v
PUBLISHER'S NOTE	vii
1. NAMMALVAR	
—Dr. V. A. Devasenapathi	1
2. SRI SANKARA	
—Prof. P. Sankaranarayanan	11
3. VEDANTA DESIKA	
—Sri M. V. Harihara Iyer	24
4. SANT KABIR DAS	
—Dr. Bankey Behari	33
5. CHHATRAPATI SHIVAJI	
—Prof. S. R. Sharma	39
6. RALF WALDO EMERSON	
—Dr. A. K. Das Gupta	50
7. LEO TOLSTOY	
—Dr. A. K. Das Gupta	63

NAMMALVAR

Dr. V. A. Devasenapathi

The *bhakti* movement in Tamilnad owes its inspiration to the Alvars of Vaishnavism and the Nayanmars of Saivism. The term 'Alvar' means one immersed in the joyful consciousness of the Lord's infinite auspicious attributes. The Alvars were thus God-intoxicated souls.

Of the twelve Alvars Nammalvar is considered to be the greatest. Taking the Alvars as a 'whole', Nammalvar is considered to be their soul. The very term 'Nammalvar' (which means our Alvar) shows the esteem in which he was and is held by the Vaishnavites. But we can go further and say that not only Vaishnavites but also all those whose hearts are thrilled by the utterances of the mystics, can claim Nammalvar as their own.

Genius, whether it is secular or spiritual is the common possession of mankind, though it might arise in a particular country and at a particular time. Mystics who are religious geniuses rise above the limitations of space and time. The words of William James are well worth recalling: '...the mystical classics have, as has been said, neither birthday nor native land. Perpetually telling of the unity of man with God, their speech antedates languages, and they do not grow old.'

There was a chieftain by name Kariyar in Tirukkurugur (also known as Alvar Tirunagari,

after the advent of Nammalvar) in the Tirunelveli District in South India. He married Udaiyanan-gaiyar. When the couple visited a Vaishnavite shrine in Tirukurungudi, they prayed for the birth of a child. The presiding deity was pleased to inform them through the temple priest that He Himself would be born as their son.

In due course a son, known to posterity as Nammalvar, was born. This is said to have been on the forty-third day of Kaliyuga (3102 B.C.). Modern research scholars fix Nammalvar's birth between the seventh and the ninth century A.D.

Nammalvar is also known by such other names as Sathakopa, Maran and Parankusan. As a child he was so different from other children that he was given the name 'Maran' (different from others). It is said that children at birth are enveloped by a vital air which clouds their intelligence. But in the case of Nammalvar it was powerless. Hence he was called 'Sathakopa'—'one who rebuked the vital air and rendered it inoperative'. The child did not weep or move its limbs or require to be fed. And yet, it looked radiant. The bewildered parents took the child to the local temple and after worshipping the presiding deity there, came out and left the child in a golden cradle studded with precious stones under a tamarind tree. Tradition has it that the identical tamarind tree is to be seen even to this day.

Nammalvar remained in a state of trance for sixteen years. He did not open his eyes or speak to anyone. But in due course there came one who deserved Nammalvar's attention.

This was Madhura Kavi who had gone on a pilgrimage to the North. While Madhura Kavi was in Ayodhya he saw one night a bright light in the South. Travelling in the direction of the light, he finally reached the tamarind tree in Tirukkurgur where Nammalvar was found in a state of trance.

Madhura Kavi wanted to know if he was conscious. So, he threw a stone to watch the reaction. On hearing the sound, Nammalvar opened his eyes. Madhura Kavi wanted to know if Nammalvar would speak. So he put the question 'If that which is limited (in intelligence) is associated with a body, where does it abide and what does it experience?' The answer was immediate and direct. "It abides there and experience that". Realising the greatness of Nammalvar, Madhura Kavi begged him to take him as his disciple. Nammalvar was pleased to grant this request.

Mounted on the Garuda, the Lord appeared with His Consort before Nammalvar. Being without the least taint of worldliness Nammalvar enjoyed the presence of the Lord continuously till his thirty-fifth year when he left this world. Nammalvar's life is unique in this respect that it could not be said of him, 'Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting', 'Shades of the prison-house begin to close upon the growing Boy'. Instead 'he beholds the light and whence it flows, he sees it in his joy'.

"And by the vision splendid
Is on his way attended".

Nammalvar's works testify to the intensity of his religious experience. Of the collection of the sacred poems of the Alvares known as the *Divya*

Prabandham, four are Nammalvar's. They are (1) *Tiruviruttam* (2) *Tiruvasiriyam* (3) *Periya Tiruvandadi* and (4) *Tiruvaimoli*. These are considered as the quintessence respectively of the four Vedas.

Madhura Kavi's devotion to Nammalvar was total and unqualified. In fact, he considered Nammalvar as the Lord Himself. "I know no Lord other than Nammalvar."

There is only one composition of his in the *Divya Prabandham*. It pulsates with the ardent devotion that Madhura Kavi felt for Nammalvar.

Similarly the philosophy of the great Acharya Sri Ramanuja is said to have been inspired by Nammalvar's works. Ramanuja interprets the *Brahma Sutras* and the *Bhagavad Gita* in the light of Nammalvar's words that the Lord pervades everything remaining invisible even as the soul does in the body. Hence, Nammalvar is hailed as Vaishnava Kulapati and his works are known as the Tamil Vedas.

There is a story that once when Ramanuja visited Nammalvar's birth-place he heard a washerman hail his sons by different names of Nammalvar. Ramanuja felt regret for having become an ascetic, instead of being a householder with an opportunity of having sons who could have been named after Nammalvar.

There are five classic commentaries on *Tiruvaimoli*, which reveal to us the wealth embodied in the verses. They enable us to understand the significance of the remark of a Vaishnavite Acharya, Sri Vedanta Desika, that with the help of the *Tiruvaimoli* he was able to understand those portions

of the Vedas which were till then obscure to him.

The subject matter of the *Tiruvaimoli* relates to the following five: (1) the Lord (2) the soul (3) means of attaining salvation (4) obstacles in the way of salvation and (5) the state of release.

The central message of the *Tiruvaimoli* is utter surrender to the Lord. This way of utter surrender is called *prapatti*. It consists in giving up all attachment to 'I' and 'mine' abandoning all sense of agency and ever looking up to the Lord for His Love, seeking Shelter at His Feet. In fact, release results the moment false attachment ceases. *Pra-patti*, in brief, is detachment from 'I' 'mine' and attachment to the Lord. This way is direct, easy and open to all.

Nammalvar's verses show how he himself followed the path of surrender to the Lord. His contemplation is frequently about the incarnations of the Lord and about the manifestations in the temples. Of the incarnations, Krishnavatara appeals to him most. The reason he gives for this special attachment is that Krishna Himself abides with him and directs him from within to serve him. The intimacy of their union is brought out by Nammalvar in terms of love between the lover and the beloved, the parent and the child. Sense of union with the Lord plunges Nammalvar into rapturous self-forgetfulness and identification with the Lord; sense of separation causes acute agony. But in using current literary forms depicting human love, Nammalvar, like other Tamil mystic poets, redeems them from sensuality and sublimates them.

The privilege of communion and union with the Lord is not earned by the soul's own efforts. It

is granted by the Lord. Though his utterances are the overflow of his own religious experience, Nammalvar does not claim them as his own work. He considers the Lord as the real author. He invites fellow-poets to keep themselves open to receive the flood of the Lord's grace assuring them that if they do so, they would also have experiences similar to his own.

He deprecates the practice of singing the praises of rich persons in the hope of enjoying their patronage. To earn one's livelihood he suggests manual labour. While the heart is given to the Lord all the time, the hand is to be used in honest work to earn enough for the upkeep of the body.

The conception of God in the *Tiruvaimoli* is very sublime. The very first line of the *Tiruvaimoli* describes the Lord as One whose excellence is supreme. But this Being of Supreme Excellence is not a far-off, high and mighty Being, indifferent to the weal and woe of souls. Hidden in every thing it pervades everything, even as the invisible soul pervades and actuates the body. This Being is so full of love for souls that in the incarnations, e.g. Ramavatara, It takes on the human form and suffers every woe that human flesh is heir to.

"Are those born in the world, anything in themselves, if they do not become devotees of the Lord, after having heard how He was born in the world and for the sake of human beings endured untold suffering. Who, seeking out the evil ones who afflicted the earth, destroyed them and thus protected and redeemed the world?"

It is said that once when Nammalvar thought of Krishnavatara and how the Lord as a child was

once tied to a mortar, he was so moved by the Lord's easy accessibility (*saualabhya*) that he passed off into a state of trance which lasted for several days.

What is the purpose of divine incarnation? It is to redeem souls from polluting embodiment and to protect them that the Lord took birth in many forms. How is this polluting embodiment brought about? It is by false knowledge and by evil conduct. It is insistence on this redeeming love that is central to every theistic faith—the insistence that the All-Highest does care for all living things; and notwithstanding Its majesty, comes down to the succour of even the lowliest of the lowly.

The conception of the infinite, generally to be found in theism, is seen in one of its clearest expressions in Nammalvar's works. This conception is different from the logician's. The logician is sure that there can be nothing other than God if He is to be considered Infinite, that to admit the reality of souls other than God is to limit the Infinite. But the Infinite of the mystics is not the Infinite of logic but the Infinite of Love. Paradoxical though it may seem, this Infinite requires an 'other' or 'others' for its Infinitude. Love would otherwise be meaningless. Nammalvar sings, "Devouring my heart and soul, He becomes full Himself." The implication is that the Lord comes in search of the soul and when He finds it, becomes the Full or the Perfect One. One of the Alvars puts it in a clear and forthright manner:

Verily I cannot exist without Thee
And even so Thou canst not, without me.

We speak of courage in following an argu-

ment whithersoever it leads and to its logical conclusion. Love calls for no less courage, for it is not afraid of an 'other'. We may add, "Love hath its victories no less glorious than logic."

To the eye of love, the beloved is beautiful. We find the conception of the Lord as the Beautiful One frequently in Nammalvar's works.

Is it meaningful to speak of the love of God for souls when there is so much suffering in the world? In one of Nammalvar's verses, we come across the following words: "Those who do not draw near Thee, smile (self-contentedly): those who are close to Thee pine in anguish." The answer to this riddle may be in terms of one's past *karma* that suffering brings about expiation of past *karma* and so is no unmixed evil. This seems to make *karma* more potent than God's love and grace. But any one who goes through the *Tiruvaimoli* (as indeed through any other devotional work) will find clear statements that by the grace of God *karma* has been rooted out. "The entire roots of past *karma* have been cut off. If by God's grace I could do this, is there anything impossible for me?"

Diseases, whether of the body or of the mind or of the soul, are cured when one is immersed in consciousness of the auspicious qualities of the Lord. This is the path that the Alvars followed and wished posterity to follow. To repeat once again the meaning of the term 'Alvars', they were persons immersed in the consciousness of the infinite auspicious qualities of the Lord. Miracles of cure of bodily diseases or deformity are hailed with great delight by the world. The Alvars teach us to overcome diseases and deformity of the soul, a

more subtle miracle, by worship of the One with infinite auspicious qualities. We may call this positive soul therapy. Nammalvar sings:

The Lotus Feet I beheld; even as I beheld Them
All *karma* disintegrated and, was utterly destroyed.

Again,

I cling to His Feet, I have got rid of sinful birth;
No more shall diseases prevail against me.

Nammalvar worships the Supreme as Vishnu. But he does not frown upon those who worship the Supreme under other names. He is sure that all true worship must be of the Supreme. Every one, according to his capacity, worships the Supreme as he conceives It and attains It. Hence there is no defect or deficiency in the object of worship. In other words, his message is: Let the worship be sincere; it will reach the Supreme.

It is usual to deplore Kaliyuga as a period wholly given over to wickedness. Nammalvar's remedy is sincere and joint worship. He says, 'If you sincerely and jointly worship, there will be no Kaliyuga.' This is sound practical advice. If we all worship the Supreme, the One with infinite auspicious qualities, how can there be wickedness? If light is let in, how can there be darkness? There is no use deploring darkness when we are enveloped by it. Let us let in light. Darkness will automatically disappear. Even so, worship of the Supreme is the antidote to wickedness.

For the ills of the world, love is said to be the sovereign remedy. Strange as it may sound, the following words are those of Bertrand Russell: "The root of the matter is a very simple and old-fashion-

ed thing, a thing so simple that I am almost ashamed to mention it, for fear of the derisive smile with which cynics will greet my words. The thing I mean—please forgive me for mentioning it—is LOVE, Christian love or compassion. If you feel this, you have a motive for existence, a guide in action, a reason for courage, an imperative necessity for intellectual honesty. If you feel this, you have all that anybody should need in the way of religion”.

Yes, all religions insist on love. But how is this universal love or compassion to be cultivated? Mystics are certain that it is only by establishing contact with That which is everywhere and which is not fettered by anything, that we can develop universal love. Short of God, any other object of worship, even humanity with a capital H, will inspire only narrow loyalties.

This is the truth taught by all mystics. We find this very clearly in Nammalvar whose sojourn in this world was inspired by the one motive of sharing with his fellowmen his experience of God. Ever beholding the One True Light, he became a Light himself to light the path for others. Madhura Kavi beheld the Light and followed it. Those of us who pray, “Lead me from darkness to Light” (“*tamaso ma jyotir gamaya*”) may also behold this Light!

SRI SANKARA

Prof. P. Sankaranarayanan

Among the Master Minds, Sages and Saviours of the World, Sri Sankara holds a place rarely equalled and never excelled by any other in any country and at any time. One must search long, wearily and in vain among the illustrious of every land for a seer and saint of such stature and of such achievement as Sri Sankaracharya. This is not a praise uttered by his devout disciples and followers alone; but it is a full-throated tribute tendered to him by those who know both in the East and in the West.

During a period of intense activity which, in the thirty-two years of his life, omitting the years of his childhood and nonage, could not have exceeded fifteen or sixteen of them, he sanctified the soil of Bharata Varsha traversing its far-flung corners on foot, performing his intellectual *digvijaya* and engaging in a religious crusade which brought the votaries of every persuasion under one universal system. His marvellous intellect guided by the instinct of absolute fidelity to scripture distilled out of the source-books of Hindu religion a philosophical Truth of unassailable certainty. In its thoroughness and in its profundity, the system of Sri Sankara holds the first place among the philosophies of the world. Much as followers of other schools may regretfully refer to the error, it is not

wholly unmerited that, generally, Vedanta and Advaita are understood to be synonymous. The chronologically first in Vedantic interpretation is also acclaimed as the logical highest.

Sri Sankara was no mere dialectical metaphysician. He also prescribed a way of life, which if properly pursued with faith and understanding, must inevitably lead to an experience in which the individual loses himself in the discovery of his true nature. Appalling as it is in its heaven-kissing grandeur, relentless in its incisive logic and, possibly, forbidding in its austere absoluteness, Advaita Vedanta has been the despair of minds of a lesser breed. But we have the authority of the illustrious line of his disciples that to a wise and initiated mind governed by discipline, and held by devotion, Sri Sankara's system grounded on *sastra*, guided by *yukti* and guaranteed by *anubhava*, in its design and in its execution, has an artistic beauty all its own which compels conviction and invites acceptance. His numerous followers have borne testimony to the validity and value of his teachings, and, even in our day, we see amidst us walking verifications of the verities that he taught.

The sacred day of Sri Sankara's advent into the world was *Vaisaakha suddha panchami*, the fifth day of the bright half of the Vaisaakha month. By a numerology known as *Katapayaadi Sankhya*, that day also determined the name that was given to him, a name of Vedic origin whose significance he justified in a superlative measure by the many acts of universal beneficence that marked his earthly life.

According to the tradition of the faithful, Sri

Sankara is the incarnation of God Parameswara Himself who, true to the assurance of the *Gita*, came into the world to arrest the decline of Dharma and enthrone it once again on the minds and wills of men. Those who, in his day, beheld the young *sannyasin* of austere beauty, radiant with spiritual light, clad in the orange garb eloquent of renunciation and carrying the anchorite staff to chase away the myriad ills which ache the human heart also saw in that *youthful* Preceptor of the *aged* pupils the replica of the universal Guru who, sitting on Himalayan heights, His gaze southward bent, dispels the darkness in the caves of ignorance by an initiating look of soothing grace and unparted lips which utter the unspoken word. If Siva who is worshipped as Dakshinamurti is the eternal Teacher of all the worlds seated in expository silence under the ageless banyan tree, Sri Sankara, it is believed, is the dynamic edition of that static splendour who walked abroad sustaining himself by his *vaadabhiksha*, speaking words of Vedantic wisdom to rescue erring mortals from the tormenting fires of life in this vale of tears. The eternal Sambhu, the Reservoir of Beneficence, became the historic Sankara who carried that Beneficence to the minds thirsting for it in the world.*

It is said that Sri Sankaracharya shares with the illustrious personalities of the world the mystery that veils their personal lives. Perhaps it is one of the laws of spiritual eminence that the great spiritual teacher must be self-effacing. Though there are a number of his biographies known as

*. *Sambhavati iti Sambhuh-Samkaroti iti Sankarah.*

Sankara Vijayas, obviously written after his time, they contain conflicting details which may confound the reader. Modern historical research concludes that he was born in 788 A.D. and lived till 820 A.D. Traditions preserved in the annals of the several *maths* that he established place Sri Sankara's birth somewhere in the second century B.C., and even earlier. Apart from minor differences, almost all the *Sankara Vijayas* agree in respect of the main events of the Acharya's life. His father Sivaguru and his mother Aryamba were pious Nambudiri Brahmans of Kalady in Kerala, South India, coming from an ancient and orthodox stock. In response to the devout prayers of the childless couple, the Lord Siva of the Tiruchur temple consented to be born as their son and thus fulfil His own mission to restore the Vedic religion and the Vedantic philosophy which had been undermined by atheistic creeds and sanctimonious practices. Asked to choose between a long lived but a stupid son and one who would live but for eight years, but would be extremely intelligent, the wife had no hesitation, not unmixed with grief, to ask for the latter.

Soon after this promise, Aryamba was blessed with a child whose divine features proclaimed that he was not of common clay, and bespoke the God that had taken shape in his being. Sivaguru passed away soon after the young boy grew under his mother's tutelage. He was soon initiated into Brahmacharya and evinced precocious mastery in the several branches of the sacred lore.

The appointed eight years were drawing to a close. Sankara went to bathe in the river flowing

by his hamlet when a crocodile caught hold of his feet. The boy cried out to his mother telling her of his parlous state and added that the only way for him to be saved from the monster's jaws was to die symbolically by taking *sannyas* then and there. The grief-stricken mother had to yield to save her son from imminent death.

Standing in the water, Sankara uttered the *mantra* of entrance into the *sannyasa* order and, coming ashore, having obtained another lease of eight years of life by his second birth, he begged leave of his mother to go forth as a wandering mendicant. With tearladen eyes, the old lady bemoaned the fate that had come on her only child, anxiously queried who would feed him and take care of him as she had done and grieved that it would not be given to her too see her son settle as a householder. Consoling her the young Sannyasin replied: 'All those who offer me *bhiksha* will be my mothers hereafter. My disciples will be my sons. I shall delight myself consorting in private with my spouse of meditation on the Supreme Being.' Promising in reply to his mother's entreaties to be at her death-bed when that hour came, Sri Sankara went forth into the wide world in quest of a Guru to be initiated and instructed by him in the traditional style. He found him on Narmada banks in the person of Sri Govinda Bhagavatpada and went through the necessary noviciate under him in record time.

Sri Sankara then travelled to Banaras where used to gather great scholars from all corners of the country. It was there that he wrote his immortal commentaries on the *Upanishads*, the *Bhagavad*

Gita and the *Brahma Sutras*. Tradition has it that Vishnu's *alter-ego*, Sage Vyasa himself engaged in dialectical dispute with Sri Sankara on the substance of the commentaries. The debate dragged on for so many days that one of the disciples of Sankara felt constrained to exclaim 'who can decide between the contestants, when one is the *avatara* of Vishnu and the other the *avatara* of Siva Himself?' Vyasa ultimately signified his appreciation of the fidelity with which Sri Sankara had commented on the *Brahma Sutras* and granted him a further lease of sixteen years to propagate the Truth of Advaita and liquidate the unorthodox systems.

More than once did Sri Sankara travel on foot through the length and breadth of India, meeting numberless opponents in debate, vanquishing them by his piercing dialectics and converting them after conviction to his ways of thought. One such historic debate was with Mandana Misra, the apostle of the ritualism of Purvamimamsa with whom he argued for forty days, with Mandana's wife herself as the umpire. The stakes were that he who was defeated should assume the other's *ashrama*. When, on the 40th day Ubhaya Bharati—that was the name of Mandana's wife—who every noon used to invite Sri Sankara for his '*bhiksha*' and Mandana for his '*meal*', invited both for their '*bhiksha*', Mandana understood that Sri Sankara had won and immediately became a *sannyasi* under the name of Sri Sureswara.

Thereafter Sri Sankara met other disputants in several parts of the country, overcame them in debate, and arrested the rot that was creeping in-

to the spiritual polity of the land. In his time, in the realm of religion, India presented a dome of many coloured sects which stained the white radiance of true religion. Warring creeds of dubious practices which entangled the mind without ennobling it claimed men's allegiance, enslaved the human spirit and degraded the human soul. Sri Sankara purged these religious sects of all their excrescences and raised them to a pedestal of worshipful dignity. He did this so completely and so successfully that other religious prophets who came after him did not have to clear the morass of diabolic unorthodoxy from the paths of Vedantic quest. Yet Sri Sankara came to fulfil and not to destroy. If today the Hindus of diverse denominations observe their fasts and feasts in worship of the several forms of the One Supreme God like *Ganesh Chaturthi*, *Sivaratri*, *Janmashtami*, *Sri Rama Navami* etc., that is because Sri Sankara rescued the ancient religion from the onslaughts of its *advaitic* opponents. His *Shanmatha Sthaapana* (establishment of six forms of religious worship) was at once a purge and a purification. He was no fanatic wedded to one faith. Uncompromising in his demand for moral purity and rational validity, he conceded that forms of worship might vary according to the wishes of the votary.

Sri Sankara visited every famous religious shrine from Badri in the North to Rameswaram in the South, from Jwalamukhi in the West to Kamarupa in the East, rehabilitated their sanctity, tempering the presiding deities into beneficent forms of abiding grace and easy accessibility, and recasting

in most of them the *yantras* which made for their religious power and potency.

A more than passing reference must be made to two famous events in Sri Sankara's life. One is his encounter with a *chandala* when he was returning from his holy bath in the Ganga at Banaras. When asked, so the story goes, to keep out of Sankara's way, the *chandala* retorted with a poser intended to put the Acharya's *advaita*-consciousness to a crucial test. Realising that he who appeared before him was no ordinary mortal, but an *atmajnani* of uncommon kind, Sri Sankara broke forth into the pentad of verses known as a *Maneeshaa-panchaka* each of which ended with the refrain that one who had realised his self as the very Brahman Itself was worthy of reverence as his Guru, be he a high caste *dwija* or a low-born *chandala*. Incidentally, it may be observed that it is wrong to interpret this as an argument for caste equality by saying that Sri Sankara got the worse of the encounter and that he was compelled to make obeisance to a mere *chandala* thus negating all distinctions of high and low birth. The kind of *chandala* that he had in mind is the one who answers to the first four lines of each *sloka*, the true *atmajnani* who has realised the Supreme Truth.

The other incident is his hastening to the death-bed of his mother upon getting a premonition of it, speeding her way to Vaikuntha by instructing her in Krishna Stotra and beginning to perform her funerals in scorn of the prevailing custom which prohibited a *sannyasi* from engaging any ritual—even that relating to obsequies to one's own mother. Jeered and boycotted by his erstwhile

kinsmen, Sri Sankara, we are told, hacked his mother's body to pieces, carried to the backyard of her house and consigned it to flames which he produced by his incantational powers. When it was all over he pronounced a curse on his clansmen of Kalady that thenceforth their own back-yards were to be their cremation ground and that no *sannyasin* should thereafter accept *bhiksha* in that hamlet.

In the course of his wanderings, Sri Sankara collected round him a host of disciples who were the conduits of his teachings to distant corners of India and beyond. Tradition preserves the names of four of these innumerable disciples, namely Sureswara, Hastamalaka, Padmapada and Totaka. Numberless also must have been the seats of Advaitic learning that were established by him and left in charge of his disciples. Four of these, each associated with one of the above four famous disciples flourish today at Sringeri, the first among them, Jagannath, Dwaraka and Badri. When the second span of sixteen years granted to him by Veda Vyasa was coming to a close, he returned to Kanchi in the South where he installed a Sri Chakra in front of Sri Kamakshi's shrine and ascended the 'throne of omniscience' and established the Kamakoti-pitha. According to more than one recension of *Sankara Vijaya*, the Acharya spent his last days at Kanchi and attained *Siddhi* there while some other traditions point to Kashmir as the place of his *sarvajna-pitha arohana* and to Kedarnath on the Himalayas wherefrom he disappeared from the scene of his labours for the spiritual regeneration of India.

These five maths, those of Sringeri, Puri, Dwaraka, Badri and Kanchi keep alive to this day in the

persons and activities of the holy successors of their illustrious progenitor the heritage of the *advaitic* wisdom and the *advaitic* way of life which is Sri Sankara's bequest to them and through them to the world at large.

Down the ages, the Advaita philosophy, which one must hasten to warn was not propounded as a new school, but was only expounded by Sri Sankara as the *aupanishadam saastram* (the teaching of the Upanishads) has claimed the respectful attention and admiring assent of every thinking man. As Swami Vivekananda used to speak of it, it is the most scientific philosophy and religion and it is remarkable how modern science pays homage to its truth throughout the writings of such distinguished savants like Eddington, Einstein, Max Plank and a host of others. Half a *sloka* gives the pith of this 'perennial philosophy' in the words: '*Brahma satyam, Jaganmithyaa, jivo brahmaiva na-aparah*'. According to Sri Sankara, Reality is only One. In the truth of Absolute non-difference, there is no room for plurality or duality, substantive or adjectival. That Reality is Pure Being and is known as Brahman. It is *sat*, *chit* and *ananda*—existence, knowledge and bliss. These three are not three-fold qualities of Brahman but the unitary substance of Brahman. No affirmative predication can be made of Brahman. Finite mortals of limited understanding cannot know what Brahman is. But what can be said is that Brahman is not like anything that we are familiar with in our world.

The manifold of our experience is a false appearance of Reality wrought by *maya* and *avidya*. *Maya* condemns itself by its impossible inconsis-

tency. Its 'reality' stands rooted in 'unreality' and 'truth' untruthful holds it falsely true. The phenomenal world is the creation of Ishvara who is the eternal incarnation of the qualityless Brahman under the cloak of *maya*. The diversity of individual existence, living and non-living, constitutes a make-believed world which is a distorted projection of the foundational Brahman which Itself is unseen and accounts for the multiplicity of forms and names. The extended world is most certainly existent to our practical consciousness, but is sublated into its substratum of Brahman as an ultimate Truth upon the dawn of enlightenment. Every individual *jiva* is in essence the Supreme Brahman appearing cribbed and confined in separating limitations, which fall asunder when the *ajnana* which fashioned them disappears by the realisation of the great declaration *That thou art*. Untouched by *maya*, the wise one who has attained this *samyakjnana* obtains release here and now. He however appears to be bound by residual *karma* to sojourn on earth till it is lived out. Yet, autonomous as he is, he goes about the rest of his life, like an automaton, oblivious of difference, a visible affirmation of absolute identity which, if he would convey it in words, must take the form 'I am Brahman'.

These truths, Sri Sankara elaborated at great length in his commentaries on the Vedantic tripod, the *Upanishads*, the *Gita* and the *Brahma Sutras*. For those who cannot, for some reason or other, have access to his *bhashyas*, he has provided a number of minor treatises as varied as one of one *sloka* only to one of a thousand *slokas*. Among these the *Vivekachudamani* and the *Upadesa Sahasri* are the

most widely read and justly popular. Alike in prose and verse, in the Bhashyas and the Prakaraṇa-granthas as also in the *bhakti-stotras* that he sang, Sri Sankara's writings constitute a body of literature of unequalled worth. Its rich variety provides for the lisping baby sweetly babbling in metric recreation and also for the meditating *mowni* losing himself in contemplative meditation.

His *Saundaryalahari* in praise of the Mother of the Universe is a hymnal masterpiece highly reputed for its spiritual power and propitiatory potency.

Sri Sankara was not a mere philosopher. He was a saviour in addition to being a seer. Prescribing discrimination, and detachment and discipline to qualify one to membership of the Society of Mumukshus, he leads the aspirant to the *advaitic* goal through the corridors of religion where he makes him worship the same Supreme Brahman manifesting Itself in diverse forms and known by different names. To him all religious practices and all forms of devotion stem from and orient toward the same underlying *advaitic* Truth. Other Vedantic schools were denominational and partisan (one had almost said—fanatical) in their religious teachings including the form in which they conceived their God and the name by which they called Him. Sri Sankara was singularly free from such creedal exclusiveness or fanaticism. His religion was superlatively universal in form and content. Other philosophies and religions may quarrel with it. But Sri Sankara's Advaita has quarrel with none.

Though centuries have passed since Sri Sankara lived and taught, there has not come into the

world another thinker so daring and uncompromising as he, who could come near him in the abundance of his spiritual graces, in the vigour of his intellect and in the comprehensiveness of his teachings. This high water-mark of philosophic thought and religious experience established by him has yet to be lowered by any achievement in the East or in the West. Paying his tribute to Sri Sankara, Pandit Nehru wrote: "He was evidently a man who was intensely conscious of his mission, a man who looked upon the whole of India from Cape Comorin to the Himalayas as the field of his action and as something that held together culturally and was infused by the same spirit, though this might take many external forms. He strove hard to synthesise the diverse currents that were troubling the mind of his day and to build a unity of outlook out of that diversity. In a brief life of thirty-two years, he did the work of many long lives and left such an impress of his powerful mind and rich personality on India that is very evident today."

Here was a World-Teacher. When comes such another?

VEDANTA DESIKA

M. V. Harihara Iyer

Sri Ramanuja, the great exponent of Visish-tadvaita, was born at Sriperumbudur in the Chingleput District. He became a *sannyasin* in early life and showed his preoccupation with religion and God in writings such as *Sri Bhashya* and *Gita Bhashya*. After him came the great teacher named Vedanta Desika (Teacher of Vedanta) removed from him by four teachers.

Vedanta Desika was born at Kancheepuram. His parents were very poor but highly devoted worshippers of Sri Varadaraja. His father Ananda Suri felt after a long period of married life that he was unlucky in not having a son. He decided to go to Tirumalai Hills with his *dharmapatni* and pray at the feet of Sri Venkatanatha.

Having worshipped there, the ideal couple were having their night's rest one day in the front portion of a house at Tirumalai. The father of Vedanta Desika was experiencing the same feelings of joy as experienced by Kuchela on his way back from Dwaraka after worshipping Sri Krishna. God's ways are mysterious. Kuchela returned home to find it converted into a palace and his wife and all his children in the midst of great pomp and splendour. He knew that it was all due to the blessings of Sri Krishna. Likewise, our devotee anxious to have a son was also blessed by Sri Ven-

katanatha with a boy in this mysterious manner—

At about midnight, the great God of Tirumalai assumed the shape of a young boy of five years with transcendent beauty and splendour and brilliance, took the bell of the temple used for daily worship, proceeded to the place where the young couple of Kancheepuram were lying. Then Sri Venkatanatha patted and woke up the *dharmapatni* who was to be the mother of the greatest scholar of Vaisnava philosophy and told her "Open your mouth." She obeyed. Then the young Child-God put the bell into her mouth and asked her to swallow it. She immediately closed her mouth not knowing who was commanding her. Suddenly the God disappeared. All was done in a trice as it were. She could not believe herself and feel what had really happened.

Thereupon she awoke her husband and told him what had exactly happened. Next day, the Archaka of the shrine did not find the bell for the purpose of *pooja*. There was a hue and cry. Then the great God announced that there was no need to use the bell for the *pooja*. So, they reconciled themselves. The Kancheepuram couple left for Kancheepuram.

Then on Sravana Nakshatra, whose presiding deity is Vishnu, in the month of Kanya in Suklapaksha the divine child who was later to become the great teacher of mankind was born. The boy was named after the Lord of the Hills. He had all the early Samskaras such as Annaprasana, Chowla and Upanayana performed in accordance with Sastras, for in those days they were performed with great faith and were not reserved to be performed

all together on the eve or at the time of the marriage as now. Venkatanatha endeared himself to his parents as much as Sri Rama to King Dasaratha and one is reminded of the verses describing Sri Rama as the object of adoration of Dasaratha and how charming and intelligent he looked. Even as a young boy just after Upanayana Venkatanatha attended classes where he got instruction in the highest Vedic lessons (*Vedanta Sutras*). He listened to them with great rapture and attention. One day when there was a discussion between the teacher, his own uncle, and the taught about some point and they could not solve the doubts, the divine genius opened his mouth and cleared their doubts in no time. The teacher felt great admiration for his young nephew and he told the boy's father that he had nothing to teach his son.

Then we are told that young Venkatanatha moved to a village called Tiruvahindrapuram near Cuddalore where he sat under a banian tree in very congenial surroundings and meditated on Garuda Bhagavan. He secured the grace of the highest Atma, finally in the form of Hayagreeva. A small idol of Hayagreeva was presented to him by Garuda Bhagavan who asked him to worship that idol. Venkatanatha had now by these blessings become fully enlightened. There was no subject in which he was ignorant. He attained the status of Sarva Tantra Swatantra. His keen intellect and great learning and power of disputation enabled him to safeguard the religion of the school from all attacks. He wrote the voluminous commentary on Sri Bhashyam, called *Adhikarana Saravali*, besides the *Tatwatika* giving in verses the substance

of every section of Sri Bhashya and answering further objections that were or might be raised. He wrote *Nyaya Parisuddhi*, *Nyaya Siddhanjanam*, *Tatwa Mukta Kalpa* and his own commentary thereon. His great Gita Bhashya is well known as *Tatparya Chandrika*. By his *Sara* and *Ratnavali* he had rendered great service to the students of Tiruvoymozhi by pointing out the connection among several portions and the attributes of the highest Atma described in each group of all verses. One of his greatest works was the *Rahasya Traya Saram* dealing with Prapatti referred to in the Upanishads in the name of Nyasa Vidya. This is a systematic treatise showing who are qualified for Prapatti, what its nature is, what help it requires and how one that has done Prapatti should live till he dies. Some of his other works are *Yadava Abhyudayam*, *Hamsa Sandesam*, *Sankalpa Suryodaya*, *Paduka Sahasram*, *Sata Dushani* and numerous *Stotrams* in Sanskrit, Tamil and commentaries on the work of previous teachers. His Vyragya was as great as his learning though he was extremely poor and lived on rice obtained by begging. A few instances showing how he was a great Siddha may be referred to. Young Venkatanatha got on account of his learning the title of Vedanta Desika (Teacher of Vedanta).

Once when he was having Unchavritti, one lady in giving rice to him (Upadanam) also put into the vessel one piece of gold thinking that Desika would not receive gold otherwise in kind or in money form. The *dharmapatni* of the Desika, while cleaning the rice for preparing the food, discovered this glittering piece and without knowing what it was, she ap-

proached her great husband who was writing his hymns on the *cadjan* leaf. Immediately he spurned away the coin with his writing instrument telling her that it was only a glow-worm. Mark the lesson taught by this great Saint! He treated gold on the same footing as glow-worm. That was the value he attached to gold. I may also refer to the royal invitation extended to him by his great compeer Vidya-ranya, the exponent of Advaita philosophy who was very desirous of conferring royal honours on Vedanta Desika. But Vedanta Desika who was Vyragya personified and whose life of life was only Lord Vishnu, rejected those invitations in two or three letters composed in great style pointing out the littleness of such pleasures.

Once his teaching to a number of disciples at Kancheepuram provoked the jealousy of another person who was well learned in the art of black magic. He thought he could disperse this assemblage headed by this great teacher and even destroy them by baling out the water of a tank nearby and diverting its course towards the assemblage. He sat near the tank, repeated his evil *mantras* and found very soon that the tank had become empty. Feeling glad at his success, he took it for granted that Vedanta Desika and his disciples would have been washed away by the tank water. However, he found that he was under an illusion, for when he went to the place where Desika was sitting and giving instruction, he found them in the very same place and the teacher giving instruction unconcerned by his diabolical act. Then to his consternation he found that the water he had baled out from the tank was flowing in another direction through a

small drainage which Vedanta Desika carved out with his toe. He fell at the feet of the great Teacher and begged pardon.

Once Vedanta Desika felt an urge to go to Tirumalai for worship. After worshipping there he wanted to perform *pooja* for his idol Hayagreeva and wanted some milk to offer as *Naivedya*. He could not get it anywhere. Then he saw a big grocery merchant's house open and went there. But before he could reach there, the trader evidently being very miserly did not want to face the guest, and closed the doors. Vedanta Desika slept in front of the house placing his idol nearby. At about midnight the trader heard some chewing noise in the room where he had stored his grocery materials. He came and peeped through the window and found a big horse standing there having emptied the contents of many bags of grain. He opened the door and begged of our Great Teacher to intervene and help him. After offering *pooja* with the milk then given willingly by the trader they went inside only to see that the horse had disappeared. Needless to say that it was all the great work of Hayagreeva who wanted to teach a lesson to this trader who was so very unkind to this venerable guest, Desika. The trader was also blessed on account of his subsequent reformation in that he found that all the bags which had been emptied by Hayagreeva contained, when he opened the same, only gold and no grains.

Vedanta Desika's greatness spread far and wide. He was invited to Srirangam to carry on a literary contest against disputants of rival schools. Desika responded to the invitation, went there, and

worshipped at the feet of Sri Ranganatha. The disputants found his learning to be very vast and they had to acknowledge defeat in no time.

Once some idlers who spent their time in the temple precincts sitting in the Garuda Mantapam and speaking ill of others, took it into their heads to spite our Great Teacher. They waited for an opportunity. In those days it was very difficult for a man to obtain a bride unless he had sufficient funds. One Brahmachari aged 25 or 26 in despair for want of funds went to this Garuda Mantapam and appealed to these idle, gossipmongers. They immediately told him in pretended seriousness to approach Vedanta Desika who was giving a lecture at that time in another Mantapam. The young Brahmachari believed it *in toto* and went and stood before Desika with folded arms. Desika asked him why he had come and he mentioned that he had been instructed by the idlers of the Garuda Mantapam to approach him for gold. Immediately our great Teacher composed certain hymns about Andal, the consort of Ranganatha and the young Brahmachari found gold pieces falling there from above. Desika asked him to receive the same and go back with his cloth full of gold. On his way he showed it to those at the Garuda Mantapam who wanted to ridicule him. They were taken aback, felt themselves humiliated beyond measure and fell at the feet of Vedanta Desika.

Some other mischief-mongers one day hung up a rope to which a number of shoes were attached on the way through which Desikan had to pass. It was done to insult and slight him. When Desika saw it, he immediately composed a hymn on Sri

Ranganatha in which he stated that he should be only too glad to worship the *Padadhuli* of the *Padaraksha* of his Bhaktas and be satisfied of the same instead of even worshipping the Bhaktas or Sri Ranganatha Himself. In fact he pronounced it as one of the methods of attaining salvation. In other words, he stated that worshipping even the *Padadhuli* of the Bhaktas is equal to the worship of Sri Ranganatha Himself. Desikan considered these idle people spending their time in the temple precincts as Bhaktas of Ranganatha. In other words, he saw divinity everywhere.

And yet another occasion arose for these people to give him another test. He invited three learned Brahmins for his father's anniversary. Some mischief-makers dissuaded those people from going to the house on the anniversary day and won over them by offering larger *dakshina* and more sumptuous food. Our Great Teacher waited after the preparation of food for the Pithrus and when he came out after a long time of waiting for the guests he found the people invited by him sitting at a place comfortably chewing their *pan-supari*. When he went and asked them, they simply explained how they fell a victim to the offers of the Teacher's enemies. Returning home he sat down after serving food for the Pithrus fully on leaves and meditated upon his Ishta Deva Garuda Bhagavan and Hayagreeva. After a few minutes when he opened his eyes, to his great surprise and satisfaction, he found that the three leaves had been emptied and that three Brahmins were marching out of his house. Needless to say that the Gods themselves in order to satisfy their devotee's

prayer came and played the part of Pithrus. One is reminded of how Dasaratha came to see Sri Rama appear in the sky before him to bless him.

Vedanta Desika's great capacity to compose verses is revealed by the fact that in a keen contest between him and another great poet, he composed a thousand verses on Sri Ranganatha's footwear. His rival was able to compose only 500 verses whereas Vedanta Desika had already completed his 1000 even before the latter part of the night. The next morning his rival before Sri Ranganatha admitted defeat, but our Great Teacher showed humility because he was highly learned. So, he remarked to his rival "Well, your verses are like 500 young elephants, whereas my verses even though they may be 1000 are equal to *Sukara Yuvathis*," i.e., young ones of pigs. This composition is known as *Paduka Sahasram*.

It is well known that our Great Teacher looked after two other great teachers at a time when Srirangam was invaded by Muslims. Vedanta Desika lived for full 102 years and attained *mukti*. May the name of this Great Saint and divine *avatar* and great Teacher bring solace, comfort and happiness and guide us all to the highest goal, viz., *mukti*.

SAINT KABIR DAS

Dr. Bankey Behari

In the holy city of Benares, some hundreds of years ago, a childless Muslim weaver, Niru by name, saw a smiling babe with bright shining forehead, sucking his thumb, lying sedate on a lotus leaf in a neglected tank.

The child saw the old man approach, and greeted him with 'ba, ba.' The old man seemed to have remembered it for ages. He immediately clasped it to his bosom, and rushed to give the good news to his aged wife. Pleased, she sent for the Maulvi, who performed the necessary ceremonies, and the child was named Kabir (the Great) which he became.

During his lifetime, Kabir performed many miracles. By his mystic utterances he impressed everyone, and by his learned harangues, he caused discomfiture to the learned Pandits. The idolators marked him out as a master iconoclast. But this reformer and saint fearlessly preached the gospel of social equality, imparting with force and preaching by practice, the gospel of his Guru, Ramnanda:

*Jati Pati Puchai Na Koi,
Hari Ko Bhaje so Hari Ka Hoi*

None shall inquire into thy caste. He who shall recite the Name of the Lord will be claimed by Him.

Kabir refused to make austerities the goal of

his life. He remained a householder for a long time and followed his profession of a weaver. The music of his loom always reminded him of the divine symphony. With skill and as a perfect craftsman, he wove his 'Jhini Chadari' (the delicate wrapper) of devotion and as a supreme artist, he steeped it in the tears of his devotion, dyeing it with his piety. It was this act of the weaver which made him proclaim without fear of contradiction, "the weaver hath looked into his heart, and there recognised God."

Tradition has it that he married twice, and his wives were ever obedient to him and ministered to his special mandates to feed every mendicant who came to his door. Many miracles are recorded about his life. One such refers to the period when the Brahmins with a view to humiliate him, circulated the news that a big '*bhoj*' (dinner) was to be held at his place. People repaired to his house. He, however, hid himself for fear of shame. The Lord, instead, played the host and a rich feast followed to the surprise of all who were called by the Lord.

Kabir was remarkable for his spiritual earnestness and this was apparent in him from the very outset. His discipleship was the first step to it. Ramanand, the great saint of the Order of Ramanuja, accepted only Brahmins as his disciples. All entreaties to relax the rule proving futile, Kabir, one day hid himself under the steps of the Ghat at Benares, where Ramanand used to go very early in the morning for his bath. Unknowingly he trod on Kabir to the great joy of the latter. The Master, in agony, of having crushed one of God's own crea-

tures, cried out 'Rama, Rama.' Kabir took it as his initiation—*mantra*. Since then he called himself the disciple of Ramanand, and began to recite 'Rama.' When Ramanand saw the earnestness of Kabir, he accepted him as a disciple. It was with him that he learned the worship and practice of the impersonal aspect (Nirguna) of the Lord. And in his zeal he denounced most vehemently the beliefs of the orthodox, ridiculed the theologians, and exhorted people against all rituals and ceremonies. He decried the learning that sought the form only and ignored the spirit. A line is ascribed to him:

*Pothi Parh Parh Jag Mua Pandit Hua Na Koi
Dhai askhar Prem Ka Parhe so Pandit Hoi*

The world passed away reading the big tomes. None found enlightenment therein. He who understood the two-and-half letters which embody love (viz. राम) gained emancipation!

He went far and wide to preach the gospel of love, which appealed all the more to the people for the richness and simplicity of the poetry in which his teachings were contained.

His *sakhis* and songs are replete with mysticism of the highest order. I give a few of the translations to illustrate the point. Macauliffe, Tagore, Underhill and others have given some translations of Kabir's songs which can be studied with profit.

Speaking of the nature of love, which is his universal theme, and about the sacrifice that the Beloved wants, Kabir says:

This is love's abode, not the home of a dear aunt.

He who severs his head and places it on the ground is admitted.

He severs the head, places it on the ground, then tramples it under foot.

Says Kabir, if such a one be thou, enter thou in.

Love grows not in the garden, nor in the market sold;

Whoever likes it, king or subject, let him purchase with his head.

I have drunk the brimful cup of love, the Teacher with knowledge hath imbued me.

Let thy love be like the Chakor's love for the moon:

Even if the head severed falls to the ground, the gaze still is fixed in the moon.

Great is the love of the fish for water, aught else falls short of it,

As soon as it is separated from water, life departs.

In the religion of Kabir the door is closed to nobody, to whatever class or nationality he might belong, nor is any special favour shown to the academician. 'The heart shall be looked into' is the brief commandment. Not the counting of the beads, nor the growing of the matted locks, not even the idol worship, nor the tinkling of bells, nor the holy pilgrimage will help. The Lord dwells within the heart. When you will pant for Him and weep bitterly in separation from Him, then would realisation dawn.

He accepts no bribe, and all these apparent charities, whilst your heart lingers in the things of the world, shall not take you one step nearer to Him Whom you say you love.

Kabir enjoined a strict code of discipline for them who will traverse the Path. He points to the meaninglessness of our occupations and the hypocrisy of our professions. The ugliness of our life is vividly portrayed by Him. While it appears so easy to woo the Beloved with Love, yet it is so difficult, for Kabir says, what the Upanishads have so often repeated:

"Difficult is the Path leading to the Beloved, it is like a sword-edge....."

Kabir wants you to be honest to yourselves. He said:

"I am the yogi of the mind: others are of the body,

Fixing the mind in Yoga, my condition has altered".

The Path pointed out by him is simple. It is, "recite the Name. Make love to Him. Happiness and wealth are mere dreams. Discriminate the dross from the gold. Realise the Divinity within thee. Beware of the net of Maya (illusion). How subtly it entangles! You should not go towards sensuousness. Every morning approach nearer to Him. Leave off vanity and be humble from this moment. Lose not the opportunity. Hear what the clay has to say to the potter:

"Saith the clay to the potter, to what purpose dost thou knead me?

Such a day shall come when I shall knead thee." "

The lines remind us of Omar Khayyam, where he says:

"I watched the potter thumping his wet clay:
And with its all obliterated tongue
It murmured, gently, brother, gently pray."

The strain of the Sufi is struck at many places by Kabir. That was the reason which led to the banishment of Kabir at the hands of the then ruling Emperor, Sikandar Lodi, who did not quite appreciate the protestant effusions and the free-thinking of Kabir.

Kabir refused to accept that Truth which proclaimed was or could ever be the monopoly of any creed. He held it was the outcome of Divine grace. And when Kabir fell ill, he refused to have himself treated, for who could treat a patient like him? Bidding farewell to the learned physicians he said:

"Depart to thy house, O Physician, my malady is beyond thee,
He who hast this pain created, He would look to my well-being."

Kabir of late has been the subject of special study by scholars. And it is not surprising to find students going to Maghar, Benares and other places

in the Central Provinces which the great saint visited. One of the profitable subjects of study would be the comparison of the philosophy of Kabir, with Vedanta, Vaishnavism and the Sufi way of thinking. There are many points of resemblance, and a thorough appreciation of the main principles of the various creeds will lead to the better understanding between the warring communities of India. For true religion consists in understanding and not merely in rituals and ceremonials. Says Kabir, 'in whose heart dwelleth the Lord performeth the best worship.' Kabir insisted on a logical approach to religion, in the true devotional spirit. He fought orthodoxy with fearlessness and bearded the lion in its own den—Benares, the stronghold of orthodoxy. Many a trick, and some at times vulgar were played to injure him, but he towered over all temptations. Once a beautiful courtesan was sent to him to turn him off the path of righteousness. The sight of Kabir converted this Magdeline, and made her an "initiate of a higher Love!"

CHHATRAPATI SHIVAJI

Prof. S. R. Sharma

Shivaji, the great liberator of Maharashtra, was born on 4th April 1630 at Shivaneri*. He was crowned *Chhatrapati* on 6th June 1674, at Raigad; and he died, at his capital (Raigad), on 4th April 1680—his 51st birth-date.

The fifty years of his glorious life showed how freedom could be achieved in a single life-time under the most discouraging conditions.

Maharashtra was then cut up among three Muslim powers: the Adilshahi of Bijapur, the Qutbshahi of Golkonda, and the Mughals. Shivaji's father Shahji was in the service of one or the other of these, all his life. The people were poor and illiterate, and their natural leaders, the landlords, quarrelled among themselves. The more ambitious among them sought service as soldiers under the Sultans. There was neither political, social, economic, nor religious freedom—for over three centuries since Allauddin Khalji conquered Devagiri (Daulatabad) and Malik Kafur overran the Deccan and South India.

The ordinary people were in despair, because even the gods seemed to be helpless. Saint Namadeva said: "The stone gods are broken to bits by the Turks and cast into the rivers; they do not even cry!" Samartha Ramadas declared: "Places of pil-

* A bronze image of infant Shivaji and his mother Jijabai is now installed at Fort Shivaneri.

grimace have been destroyed; the homes of the Brahmans are desecrated; the whole earth is shaken; *Dharma* is gone."

There was, however, one hope: namely, the Marathas were a brave and pious people, and they had produced warriors as well as saints, generation after generation. In ancient times, the Chinese pilgrim Hiuen Tsang described the people of the Deccan as honest and courageous men: "Whoever does them a service may count on their gratitude; but he who offends them will not escape their revenge. If anyone insults them, they will risk their lives to wipe out the insult. If one goes to them in difficulty, they will forget to care for themselves in order to help him. When they have an injury to return, they never fail to give warning to their enemy. In battle, they pursue the fugitives, but do not slay those who give themselves up." This is, indeed, high praise, but well deserved.

From the accounts of most foreign travellers we may say that this has always been the character of Indians since the time of Chandragupta Maurya—the first great fighter for our freedom against foreign aggression.

The saints of Maharashtra, from Jnaneshvar to Ramadas, bear witness to the piety of the Marathas. Jnaneshvar wrote his famous book the *Jnaneshvari* on the eve of Allauddin Khalji's invasion of the Deccan. It is a great commentary on the *Bhagavad Gita* in the language of the people as it was spoken then. Arjuna was dejected and would not fight. But Sri Krishna inspired him to do his duty as a Kshatriya. The *Gita* has been a source of great inspiration to all. Mahatma Gandhi said:

“When doubts haunt me, when disappointments stare me in the face, and I see not one ray of hope on the horizon, I turn to the *Bhagavad Gita*, and I find a verse to comfort me, and I immediately begin to smile in the midst of overwhelming sorrow.”

Jnaneshvar made the *Gita* very popular by his beautiful and poetic style. The *Jnaneshvari* is even now read, enjoyed and admired by thousands of people, not only in Maharashtra, but all over India. It has been translated into various languages of India and Europe. No wonder that Maharashtra was fascinated and inspired by it over six hundred years ago. Jnaneshvar was only sixteen years of age when he commenced his immortal work.

The saints who lived in his time or followed him during the four centuries (1300-1700) came from all classes. Namadeva was a tailor; Janabai was his maid-servant; Gora was a potter; Sena was a barber; Savanta was a gardener; Narahari was a goldsmith and Chokha was a *harijan* sweeper! They together formed a Democracy of Devotion.

Then came Ekanath Tukaram and Ramadas and a host of others. Tukaram was a farmer-trader. His *abhanga*-songs are chanted to this day, not in temples only, but in the homes of the rich and the poor alike: the labourers sing them as they go to work or lie down tired under a tree in the sultry hours of noon and feel greatly comforted.

Ramadas left home when he was only twelve years of age. He wandered all over Hindusthan up to the Himalayas. His was a countrywide pilgrimage on foot: a *pada-yatra*. He saw how miserable the people were, particularly in Maharashtra. He

would not merely sit down and meditate. He organised his disciples and followers in *mathas*. He awakened them from their lethargy. He stimulated them to great endeavours. His *Dasa-bodha* is an inspiring book like the *Jnaneshvari*. His *Manache-Slokas* ("Self-advice to the mind") are one of the first things a child learns at school in Maharashtra even today. His beautiful poem "*Ananda-vana-bhuvana*" gives a charming picture of the aspirations of Maharashtra of his time. It reflects immense faith in God to deliver the people from bondage.

Shivaji was just twelve years of age when his father placed him in charge of his mother Jijabai and tutor Dadoji at Poona. Shahji was too busy with his military expeditions in the far South. These resulted in his acquisition of valuable *jahgirs* like Vellore, Jinji, Tanjore, Bangalore, etc. They were to afford the Marathas safe retreats when their homes in the Deccan were devastated by the armies of Aurangzeb.

But meanwhile, young Shivaji could grow up in Poona under Dadoji who was a trustworthy and efficient estate-manager. Shivaji learned his first lessons in administration from his dutiful tutor Dadoji. He also imbibed from his highly cultured mother the spirit of *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*. The exploits of Sri Ramachandra against the *rakshasas* in the Deccan itself and his war against Ravana (an incarnation of evil) thrilled the boy Shivaji as Jijabai narrated the stories. Most of all, he felt inspired to emulate the heroism of the boys Kusha and Lava!

The atmosphere rang with the cries of dis-

tress among the people, mixed with the songs of the saints. They produced in the spirited Shivaji a restless desire to rescue "Sita" (his homeland) from the clutches of "Ravana" (those who held Maharashtra in bondage). The picture of "*Ananda-vana-bhuvana*" later provided him with an ideal to work for. The *mathas* established by Samarth (‘the powerful’) Ramadas were centres of spiritual activity and sources of inspiration. Shivaji longed to capture the forts in his neighbourhood and make them strongholds of political freedom. Eventually he achieved all that he dreamed.

Shivaji soon gathered around himself young men like Tanaji (of Simhagad fame), Baji Deshpande (the hero of Pavanakhind), and Murar Baji (the saviour of Purandar). All of them sacrificed themselves that Maharashtra might live. Thousands died "for the ashes of their fathers and the temples of their gods." Their exploits were celebrated all over the land in spirited songs called '*Povadas*'. One sample may be cited here in translation. It is only a fragment from the famous *Ballad of Tanaji*:

And ye Marathas brave! give ear,
Tanaji's exploits crowd to hear.
Where from your whole dominion wide
Shall such another be supplied?
O'er seven and twenty castles high
His sword did wave victoriously.
The iron-years are backward roll'd,
His fame restores the age of gold;
When'er this song ye sing and hear,
Sins are forgiven, and heaven is near!

We need not dwell on the well known adventures of Shivaji himself: like his overthrow of Afzal Khan at Pratapgad (where a national memorial

now stands overlooking the scene); his visit to Agra (to 'beard the lion in his own den!'), and his romantic return therefrom; and his historic raids on Surat. It is interesting to note, however, that, according to an English resident of Surat (Mr. Anthony Smith, a servant of the East India Company) "Sevajee told that he was not come to doe any personal hurte to the English or other merchants, but only to revenge him selfe of Oram Zeb (the Great Mogol), because he had invaded his country. . . ." (*English Factory Records*, Bombay).

The attitude of Shivaji towards the English and other Europeans was, on the whole, friendly. He invited them to his coronation at Raigad, in 1674, and treated them with becoming hospitality. The English records state that their "reception was very kind." They were also assured that "the Rajah would, after his coronation, act more like a Prince, by taking care of his subjects, and endeavouring the advancement of commerce and trade in his Dominions to which he could not attend before, being in perpetual wars with the Kings of Bijapore and the great Mogul."

Historians have, generally, devoted more attention to Shivaji's military career and his exploits than to his civil achievements. Shivaji was, no doubt, one of the greatest military geniuses known to history. His movements were as swift as those of Akbar before him and Napoleon after him. An *English Factory Record* of 1664 reads: "Report hath made him an airy body, and adds wings! or else it were impossible he could be at so many places as he is said to be at all at one time! He is very nimble and active, imposing strange labours

upon himself that he may endure great hardships and also exercises his chiefest men that he flies to and fro with incredible dexterity.”

He created a powerful army almost out of nothing! For he was the son of a mere *jahgirdar*. In course of time, it comprised a sturdy infantry, a swift horse and an effective naval division. The last in 1680 captured from the English the twin islands of “Henry Kenry” (Underi Khanderi), off Bombay, after a well fought naval action. Dr. Fryer who visited Bombay soon after, writes: “Amidst these wars and rumours of wars, we *quietly laid down our arms...*”

Shivaji was not only feared but respected even by his enemies for his noble character. It is not so much power that matters, but the manner of its exercise. The Mughal historian Khafi Khan truly records: “He (Shivaji) made it a rule that, whenever his followers went plundering, they should do no harm to the mosques, the Book of God, or the women of anyone. Whenever a copy of the sacred *Qoran* came into his hands, he treated it with respect, and gave it to some of his Musalman followers.”

The last reference is noteworthy. One of Shivaji's admirals was a Muslim; so also was one of his private secretaries. Besides, he honoured Muslim saints like Baba Yakut just as he did the Hindu saints Ramadas and Tukaram. His remarkable religious tolerance and liberal outlook are very well reflected in his famous letter to Aurangzeb. It reads:

To the Emperor Alamgir,
This firm and constant well-wisher Shivaji, after rendering
thanks for the grace of God and the favours of the Emperor

....begs to inform Your Majesty that—
It has recently come to my ears that, on the ground of the war with me having exhausted your wealth and emptied your treasury, Your Majesty has ordered that money, under the name of *jiziya*, should be collected from the Hindus and the imperial needs supplied with it.

May it please Your Majesty!

That architect of the fabric of empire, Akbar Padishah.... adopted the admirable policy of Universal harmony (*sulh-i-kul*) in relation to all the various sects, such as Christians, Jews, Muslims, sky-worshippers, Brahmans, Jainas, and even materialists and atheists! *The aim of his liberal heart was to cherish and protect all the people.* So, he became famous under the title of *Jagat Guru*: (World's Spiritual Guide).

He who lives with a good name gains everlasting wealth, Because, after his death, the recital of his good deeds keeps his name alive.

May it please Your Majesty!

If you believe in the true Divine Book and Word of God, you will find there that God is styled *Rabbi-ul-alamin* (Lord of all men) and not *Rabbi-ul-musalmin* (Lord of the Musalmans only)....

Verily, Islam and Hinduism are different colours used by the Divine Painter for filling in the outlines of His picture of the entire human race. If it be a mosque, the call to prayer is chanted in remembrance of Him. If it be a temple, the bell is rung in yearning for Him alone.

To show bigotry for any man's creed and practices is equivalent to altering the words of the Holy Book: to draw new lines on a picture is equivalent to finding fault with the painter....

In strict justice, the *jiziya* is not lawful at all.... Apart from its injustice, this imposition of the *jiziya* is an innovation in India and inexpedient.... To oppress ants and flies is far from displaying valour and spirit!....

May the Sun of Your Royalty continue to shine above the horizon of greatness!

How noble, large-hearted and courteous! Such, indeed, was Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, the founder of Maratha Svarajya: an exemplar of the fight for freedom without hating anybody—not for self-glorification but for the good of all people.

The great Indian historian, Sir Jadunath Sarkar, has summed up the brilliant achievements of Shivaji in these words: "Shivaji's greatness lay

in his *character and ability*, rather than in the originality of conception or length of political vision. Unfailing insight into the character of others, efficiency of arrangements, and instinctive perception of what was practicable and most profitable under the circumstances—these were the causes of his success in life. The imperishable achievement of his life was the welding of the scattered Marathas into a nation, and his most precious legacy was the spirit that he breathed into his people. And he achieved this in the teeth of the opposition of four mighty powers like the Mughal empire, Bijapur, Portuguese India and Abyssinians of Janjira. No other Hindu has shown such constructive genius in modern times. He has proved by his example that the Hindu race can build a nation, form a state, defeat enemies; they can conduct their own defence; they can protect and promote literature and art, commerce and industry; they can maintain navies and ocean-trading fleets of their own, and conduct naval battles on equal terms with foreigners. *He taught the modern Hindus to rise to the full stature of their growth.*" (*Short History of Aurangzeb.*)

The real test of the vitality of a person, institution, or nation, is its capacity to withstand a crisis. The *Adnyapatra* of Ramachandrapant Amatya (one of the great ministers of Shivaji) observed: "The kingdom was invaded by a powerful enemy in the person of Aurangzeb. He used all his valour and resources, in wealth and materials, for the destruction and conquest of this kingdom. But all his efforts proved futile, *by the grace of God!*"

Prof. R. D. Ranade, in his great book on the

Maratha Saints, observes that "Ramadas, more than any other saint of Maharashtra, called people's minds to the performance of Duty, while the heart was to be set on God... No wonder that with this teaching he helped the formation of the Maratha Kingdom, as no other saint had done before."

Shivaji acknowledged his gratitude to Ramadas, with characteristic humility, thus: "Obeisance to my noble Teacher, the father of all, the abode of bliss! Shivaji, who is merely like dust on the Master's feet, places his head at the feet of his Master, and submits: I am greatly obliged to have been favoured by your supreme instruction, in the establishment of *Dharma*, in the service of God, in the amelioration of my subjects, and in their protection and succour... Whatever kingdom I have acquired, I have placed at your feet, and dedicated myself to your service." (Letter written in the fifth year of *Rajyabhisheka*.)

Another unique document, dated 28th January 1677, is a proclamation of the Chhatrapati addressed to all classes and ranks of his subjects. It reads like the Magna Carta of British history or Queen Victoria's Proclamation of last century. Its concluding paragraph runs as follows:

All sufferers from oppression by selfish and evil persons, creating fresh trouble, contrary to the teachings of the scriptures, should appeal to the Government. Action will be promptly taken against them, in accordance with the scriptures, without regard to personalities and without prejudice for the establishment of *Dharma*. These days, the Yavanas are pouring in from the North. Hence, people of all castes should unite and act with one mind and heart, to defeat the enemy. Remember that in this lies your prosperity and that of the State. *God will bless all!*

Shivaji, as we saw, was no doubt one of the

greatest warriors and kings known to history. But he was also one of the best and noblest of men. He was a dutiful and affectionate son. Though his father Shahji was away from him most of the time, Shivaji had the highest regard for him. He loved his noble and great mother Jijabai as Napoleon did his own mother, nay, he adored her as a goddess.

The famous goddess Tulja Bhavani inspired and protected Shivaji all through his life. She presented him with the miraculous sword which Shivaji reverently called "Bhavani."

His valiant son Sambhaji was a dauntless soldier and died a martyr fighting against Aurangzeb. His second son Rajaram inherited all the humanity and large-heartedness of Shivaji Maharaj.

The title of "Chhatrapati" (Lord of the Umbrella) assumed by Shivaji was a unique symbol of the kindly protection he afforded his subjects 'in sunshine and in rain': in times of peace and in times of war.

RALPH WALDO EMERSON

Dr. A. K. Das Gupta

Ralph Waldo Emerson was born on May 25, 1803. His father William Emerson graduated at Harvard College and was minister in the village of Harvard. His mother was Ruth Haskins and Emerson was their fourth child and third son.

Another Bostonian, an equally illustrious son of the new colony of New England, was Benjamin Franklin. He was born on the same day and in places not separated by any distance. Both the babies breathed the same air.

Ralph's education began at the age of three. His father took personal interest in the education of William and Ralph. He wanted them to appear before him even before breakfast to show their progress in English grammar.

The family lived a simple, unostentatious life. The children, trying to be useful to the family, laboured hard, became well-disciplined and unselfish. They learnt to sacrifice personal comforts to serve others. Moral discipline came to be ingrained in the blood.

Ralph was handicapped by ill-health. But as he grew, he never lazed away his time. He became serious-minded and did his best to give a good account of himself. He was never garrulous. He measured every word he uttered. His conduct was above board and uniformly good. He never struck a discordant note while in the company of his

young friends. He was noted for his calmness of disposition and unruffled temper. Nobody ever saw boy Emerson in violent tantrums. He endeared himself to all with whom he consorted.

Even as a toddler, Ralph developed a passion for Greek and Latin. He was a shy and retiring type. His favourite pastime was to sit on a wall overlooking a garden where pears grew.

At the age of eleven Ralph rendered Virgil into English verse. He studied French even earlier. Most of his schooling he had at the Latin School from Master Benjamin Gould. It is on record that boy Ralph used to run away from Mr. Webb's school during school hours and 'enjoyed the stolen hours on the common'. Didn't the famous Belgian poet, Maurice Maeterlinck (1862-1949) play the truant from school? At a later stage Ralph took a lively interest in history, fiction, poetry and passages loud with rhetorical flourish.

Ralph's mother was a dignified lady of culture and refinement and pious nature. She must have given him that suavity and dignity that distinguished him. Another lady to exercise a healthy influence on Ralph was his aunt, Mary Emerson, who constantly studied and discussed philosophical and theological subjects and opposed all shams of the society. She had undoubtedly a hand in fashioning out the Emerson brothers as courageous and self-reliant.

Both the ladies insisted on doctoring their minds and souls, rather than their bodies, so they were not so very mindful of food and clothes for

the children. The care and welfare of the soul was everything to them.

Emerson was admitted to Harvard College in August, 1817, on passing a good test and was appointed President's Freshman i.e. something like a messenger. He was given accommodation free at the President's residence. He was also engaged as a waiter at Commons and earned a little amount with which he could manage a great part of his boarding expenses. But for such privileges it would have been difficult for Emerson to pursue higher studies.

The President was generous enough to order credit facilities for Emerson and payment of £10 to him from Eder Penn bequest to poor scholars. He gave Ralph further help by engaging him as a private tutor to his nephew. President Kirkland's nephew was Lothrop who became the Rev. Dr. Samuel Kirkland Lothrop. His continued interest in Emerson showed his magnanimity. Fearing lest Emerson's studies would be disturbed, at the beginning of the next session he was relieved of the tutor's responsibilities.

Emerson at the age of sixteen won prizes for his essays on the "Character of Socrates" and the "Present State of Ethical Philosophy." He also won a Babyston prize (30 dollars) for elocution. He brought the amount home to buy some woollen for his mother, but he felt sorry to find that the baker's bill used it up.

Emerson soaked in all that he could from the college course of study but remained unsatisfied. He confessed he had no brains for Mathematics. He had positive dislike for Analytical Geometry.

He diverted himself at night by reading Chaucer, Montaigne, Plato and Plutarch. He graduated in 1821. He did not give proof of his intellectual brilliance. He was number 30 in a class of 59. He became Doctor of Laws in 1867.

It is interesting to know that young Emerson had a flair for declamation. He would stand on a sugar barrel and regale his Concord audience by reciting verses from Campbell and Milton.

Emerson's aloofness and restrained manner marked him out as a man above the crowd, but this stiffness did not proceed from any bloated sense of superiority. He was by nature shy and lived like a thing apart.

Emerson was an omnivorous reader, almost an indiscriminate reader. Between 1824 and 1832 he read through all great writers of the world.

Emerson was obliged by circumstances to begin life as a school-teacher who lived and died as a world-teacher. He worked for over a year in a school for young ladies of Boston founded by his brother William. He enjoyed his work at school and he used to jot down his first thoughts on morals during intervals of his leisure, which did sweeten many years of his later life.

The occupation of school-keeping proved hopeless and unattractive. Emerson writes: "Better tug at the oar, dig the mine, or saw wood; better sow hemp or hang with it than sow the seeds of instructions."

Emerson could not enthuse over the college education of his day. It is intense gloom that he expresses: "How sad a spectacle, so frequent nowadays, to see a young man, after ten years of college

education come out, ready for his voyage of life, and to see that the entire ship is made of rotten timber, of rotten honey-combed, traditional timber without so much as an inch of new plank in the hull." According to Emerson, a scholar is "the world's eye and the world's heart." He says further: "The main enterprise of the world for splendour, for extent, is the upbuilding of a man."

Emerson paid court to Ellen Louisa Tucker, a budding girl of great beauty, daughter of a Boston merchant, for a little over nine months and married her on September 30, 1829. He was then 26 and his bride 18. His happiness was full, but he sensed the coming gloom, thinking of the immutable law which makes life swing between smiles and tears. His wife died on 29th March, 1832, of consumption.

In 1835 he married again Miss Lydia Jackson of Plymouth (Massachusetts) whose brother was Dr. Jackson, an eminent anaesthetician. In the same year, soon after marriage, Emerson had the honour of being elected one of the hog-reeves for the town.

Emerson had two daughters, Ellen and Edith. His third child, little Waldo, died on January 27, 1842, at the age of five. This death in the family which took place ten years after the death of his first wife, gave a bad blow to Emerson's peace and happiness. His youngest child, Edward Waldo, was born on 10th July, 1844, who became a Doctor of Medicine.

About this time Emerson kept himself busy in publishing a volume of Carlyle's work in America.

Emerson was a model father. He gave love to

his family, and greatly appreciated the loving care of his wife. He thanked heaven for his long and happy married life.

Emerson addressed large gatherings in the four winter months, striving to enlighten the public on various subjects, moral, religious and philosophical. The rest of the year he spent in literary pursuits and in making preparations for public lectures. In fact, he lived by public lectures. In Boston a course of ten lectures brought him 500 dollars. His income was rather meagre. His uncle, Rev. Samuel Ripley, placed funds at his disposal when necessary.

At the early age of 23, Emerson felt a strain on the chest after each sermon, but even at 50, he loved outdoor sports and skated with his children.

Emerson always dressed simply and inconspicuously. He was noted for his genial courtesy and sweet and pleasant address. Though he sought aloofness, he enjoyed the society of the highly cultured. By no stretch of imagination could he be regarded as a popular social figure. He was not made to mingle in the glittering crowd. A seer and a sage could not be a good 'mixer'.

Emerson dreamed of every home as a shrine, a sanctuary, where truth would thrive, where the kindly spirit of man should shine and give warmth to all. Poverty of spirit and luxury of living must remain miles away from a good home. "It is from the poor man's hut alone that strength and virtue come." Again: "Without the rich heart, wealth is an ugly beggar."

Emerson, frugal and simple as he was in his habits and tastes, disliked meat-eating which only

showed our narrow ideas of justice. He thought that a man would not be better than the beast he ate.

Like Thoreau, Emerson made his wants very few and ate the simplest food and felt as though he were richer than the richest who were unwise and heartless. Like Thoreau, Emerson disliked drinking alcohol which had a degrading influence, though he took a little wine in the company of his guests of honour. And only in company he smoked a fraction of a cigar, and called tobacco, 'the scatter-brain tobacco' and not like Sir James Barrie, 'My Lady Nicotine'. He did not always like visitors in the house. It was not that he was discourteous, but he had keen sense of the value of time and grudged the passage of time without filling it with useful work. An unimaginative visitor was 'the Devastator of the Day'.

Emerson loved music which was as refreshing and soothing as a bath and medicine. He wrote: "It (music) takes us out of the actual and whispers to us dim secrets that startle our wonder as to who we are, and what, whence and whereto."

God preserves the good and the great. The loss of his first wife, of his two loving and lovable brothers, of his five-year-old son Waldo, Emerson bore with calm resignation. Then came the misfortune of the burning of his house. This calamity brought ample compensation in the form of ready help and funds from friends for the restoration of his house.

They arranged a tour abroad for Emerson and his daughter Ellen that the great man might recruit fresh energy from a change of scene and surroundings. Even Englishmen offered him help to rebuild his house, which, however, he refused, thinking that

the help given by his own countrymen was good enough.

Emerson was in the grip of old age in 1866 (then 63) when he wrote his last poem, "Terminus" from which the lines quoted below show his conquest, like Tagore's, of the fear of death.

Lowly faithful, banish fear,
Right onward drive unharmed;
The port, well worth the cruise, is near,
And every wave is charmed.

Even in his middle age, Emerson could write: "My life is a May-game. I will live as I like. I defy your straight-laced, weary, social ways and modes. Blue is the sky, green the fields and groves, fresh the springs, glad the rivers, and hospitable the splendour of sun and star. I will play my game out."

Emerson advocated manual labour. The use of hands should be made by every person. "A man should have a farm or a mechanical craft for his culture. We must have a basis for our higher accomplishments, our delicate entertainments of poetry and philosophy, in the work of our hands... Labour is God's education..." He would say, "A little Integrity is better than a career." And especially to young men: "Nothing is at last sacred but the integrity of your own mind." Emerson believed in working for the society. He served as a member of the Fire Association. He did not hesitate to serve fellow-men in any mean capacity. He was imbued with the ideal of loyalty to the society and State.

An ideal scholar, according to Emerson, must have in his make-up:

Freedom, bravery, sincerity, pursuit of truth, the spirit of sacrifice for great things.

He noticed much that was ridiculous frivolity in

society. He wrote: "Society is barbarous until every industrious man can get his living without dishonest customs. Society in large towns is babyish, and wealth is made a toy."

Again: "The evolution of a highly destined society must be moral; it must run in the grooves of the celestial wheels. It must be catholic in aims." His comments on fashion in society are: "Fashion is a word of narrow and often sinister meaning. Fashion is virtue gone to seed. Many facts concur to show that we must look deeper for our civilization than to steam, photographs, balloons, or astronomy. It (civilization) has not ended, nor given sign of ending, in a hero. 'Tis a wild democracy; the riot of mediocrities, and dishonesties and fudges. Ours is the age of the omnibus, and of the Third Person Plural, of Tammany Hall."

Emerson never liked a man with rambling propensities. Those men who were for 'anywhere but here' could not gain his approval. He showed lukewarm interest in travelling.

Emerson was a man who kept his composure in all circumstances. Yet he felt he would be happier if his house gave shelter to some fellow-mortals. He offered the Alcotts free hospitality for a year. But his plan proved disappointing. He was kind to his servants and he wished to revive 'the patriarchal institution of a common family-board'. But the maid Lousia would not sit at the table with the cook (Lydia) and Lydia felt the cook was not fit to come to the table. Thus, his grand scheme ended in a fiasco.

Though a sage in the seclusion of Concord, he did not lose touch with real life. Honours came to

him in a rapid succession. In 1863 he was made a 'Visitor' to the Military Academy at West Point and in 1866 Phi Beta Kappa Orator at Harvard; in 1867 he was awarded the degree of LL.D. by his own college. From 1867-1879, he served as Overseer of Harvard. In 1870 he delivered a course of lectures on "Natural History of Intellect". In 1874 he was nominated for the office of Lord Rector of Glasgow University. In 1876 he had the honour of addressing the University of Virginia. In 1881 he spoke on Carlyle's death. In 1882 he spoke on the occasion of Longfellow's funeral.

It may be of interest for the readers to know that Emerson was in the Divinity School from 1823 to 1826, that he was 'approbated to preach' in 1826, and that he parted from the Church in 1832. He made himself a public Speaker and Preacher.

The force of his speeches denouncing slavery was tremendous, as all his speeches which were aimed at the follies and foibles of the society, at the shams and hypocrisies eating like canker-worms into the lives of people, at the heartless and wealthy beggars. The problem of slave traffic kept him busy for over two decades and made him both a student and an advocate of law. By 1872 he had become a public institution, exercising stellar influence on the entire civilized world.

Emerson's whole being rose against dishonesty, hypocrisy and injustice. In the conflict between the United States and the Cherokee people (aboriginal) a treaty by which all the Cherokee territory was contracted (in December, 1835) was concluded by nondescript persons on either side, and Emerson addressed in 1838 a letter to Presi-

dent Martin Van Buren. An extract from the letter will show the brave mettle of Emerson: "You, Sir, will bring down that renowned chair in which you sit into infamy, if your seal is set to this instrument of perfidy; and the name of this nation, hitherto the sweet omen of religion and liberty, will stink to the world.... However feeble the sufferer, and however great the oppressor, it is the nature of things that the blow should recoil upon the aggressor. For God is in the sentiment and it cannot be withstood....". Even in war he would not plead for peace, allowing high principles to be compromised.

The philosopher in Emerson approved of benevolent kings and nobles, but not the patriarchal form of government which readily became despotic. Democracy suited Americans better than any other form of polity because the religious sentiments of the people were in accord with democracy. In this view, "Every State is corrupt. Good men should not obey the laws too well." The State could only be renovated on the principle of right and love.

It was against Emerson's grain to get imbroiled in politics. But political problems could not but trouble him. The more he thought about politics the more he realised that morality was the object of government. Was Emerson a socialist? It is better not to categorise him as a politician. According to many able thinkers, Emerson represented the spirit of revolt. He had ever thought of the individual as the most important unit of the society. His world was but a collection of individuals. His doctrines of *self-reliance* and *opportunity* inclined him to the cause of democracy.

Emerson the preacher, poet and philosopher, is unforgettable. He lives on in his poetry, essays and addresses. His richly-jewelled prose compositions on an endless variety of subjects are full of profound thoughts, the parquetry of his poetry is woven round themes like *Brahma*, *Woodnotes*, *Friendship*, *Beauty*, *May-Day*, *Boston Hymn*, *Give All to Love*, etc.

Apart from his essays on Spiritual Laws, Love, Self-Reliance, Friendship, the Over-soul, Art, Character, the Poet, the world remembers Emerson as the famous author of *Representative Men* (rich in commentaries on Plato, Swedenborg, Napoleon, Shakespeare, Goethe, etc.), *Society and Solitude*, *English Traits*, *The Conduct of Life*, *Letters and Social Aims*, and *Addresses* (on the American Scholar, Literary Ethics, The Method of Nature, The Transcendentalist, etc.). It is clear from his writings that Emerson had drunk of the fountain of the religious lore of ancient India.

As the end was coming, his powers declined fast, and Emerson had no energy left for writing letters to his friends, not even to his good friend, Carlyle, nor for following any complicated narrative. He found it difficult to figure out Longfellow whose funeral he had attended a week before. His son, E. W. Emerson, read out to him a portion of Paul Revere's Ride which being a Concord story delighted him—perhaps the last piece he had enjoyed.

It was about the middle of April, 1882, that Emerson caught a chill, ran a temperature for a few days, aggravating his illness by walking in the

rains without wearing his topcoat. Cold developed into pneumonia. One Dr. Charles P. Putnam had the distinction and privilege of attending on Emerson, the Concord sage. The last agony came and he was given ether to induce sleep. He died peacefully in the evening of 27th April, 1882.

Three days later on Sunday, 30th April, the body was interred under a pine tree on the hill called Sleepy Hollow, beside his mother and child. The last resting-place was chosen by Emerson himself long before his death.

Thus the great life ended but not Emerson's influence. Even today we would take our spiritual problems to Buddha, Jesus Christ, Emerson, Tolstoy, Ramakrishna, Gandhi, rather than to Newton and Einstein.

LEO TOLSTOY

Dr. A. K. Das Gupta

Leo Tolstoy came of the distinguished Tolstoy family of Russia. His forefathers were big landlords and masters of thousands of serfs and retainers, all powerful men who loved wars as they loved court intrigues and diplomatic tactics. Some of them took active part in administration and warlike campaigns, as also the Napoleonic wars.

Leo's father Nikolai Tolstoy (the model for Rostov in *War and Peace*) went on the 1812 campaign against Napoleon. His mother, Princess Volkonski, knew Russian, French, German, English and Italian and could invent folk-tales. She was endowed with great moral qualities. The Tolstoys, like all Russian noble families, were inter-related through marriage.

Leo lost his mother before he was two years old. He heard a lot about his mother from his aunts and family servants. He thought highly of his mother's spiritual qualities. When he remembered her, he thought of her saintliness. In schooling her children, she had her inspiration from Rousseau's Emile. She liked her children to be kind-hearted rather than just alert-minded.

Leo came into this world on August 28, 1828. He had three brothers; Nikolai (Leo's favourite), Sergei (a 'dandy'), Dmitri (black sheep of the family, model for the brother of Levin in *Anna*

Karenina), and a sister Marya Nikolayevna (became a nun). Leo was greatly impressed by the handsome personality of his father who had settled down at Yasnaya Polyana, and as a landlord, was unusually kind to his serfs. His father's passion for hunting had also fascinated his imaginative mind.

Leo spent his early boyhood in a feminine atmosphere. His grandmother regaled him with stories and taught him the delight of loving. The grandmother used to take the children in the cabriolet into a grove of hazel trees and the nut glade which was filled with the scent of the leaves.

Among his brothers, the handsome, proud and self-confident Sergei filled him with adoration. Leo deeply loved his eldest brother Nikolai who was endowed with their mother's mental and moral virtues.

What first made Leo feel 'serious' in his life? It was their severe German tutor who insisted on irksome hours of duty. In *Childhood* Tolstoy gave an account of his tutor: "Foydor Ivanovich had been a shoemaker, a soldier, a rope-maker, and a bit of a Don Juan." But Ivanovich was kind and sentimental; he was absent-minded and sometimes got lost in hydrostatics; however, he punished his wards if they neglected their lessons by sending them to kneel in the corner.

More significant than his German lessons were his moral lessons which encouraged tolerance and kindness to the poor and destitute. Ivanovich, it must be mentioned to his credit, stimulated among the Tolstoy brothers an interest in producing a small magazine.

It is interesting to find that Leo, then a boy of seven, contributed short articles on the eagle, hawk, owl, parrot, cock and humming-bird. Aunt Tatyana taught French and laid a sound foundation for Leo. It appears that upto the age of nine, Leo had no systematic education.

Early in 1837 the family moved to Moscow. Father Tolstoy made himself scarce to his children. In the summer he went on business to Tula. While visiting his friend Temyashyov, he suddenly dropped dead in the street. The body was brought to Yasnaya Polyana for burial. The death brought to Leo's sensitive mind a feeling of religious horror and raised the eternal questions of life and death.

Tolstoy never proved to be a strong student, either in boyhood or in youth. He refused to assimilate any text unless his intellectual curiosity was roused. Conventional educational methods did not work in his case. The united efforts of several teachers, including student-teachers, failed to arouse his enthusiasm from the age of nine to thirty.

What was going on in the mind of that dull scholar, Leo Tolstoy? It was the problem of human happiness that tortured the young mind. He thought he found a solution and he readily practised it. If man can accept and endure suffering, he can never be unhappy.

So, in order to get used to pain and suffering, he would lash his bare back severely, bringing tears to his eyes. So for whole days he would not mind his lessons.

Leo became self-conscious too early in life. He was painfully aware of his personal ugliness, his thick lips, broad nose, small eyes and tufted hair, his awful shyness, his self-conscious pride. In boyhood he was singularly lonely. He was put through a drilling in fencing and riding, and his thoughts turned to the army.

As a boy he was stirred by the sound of fire-engines drawn by fast horses. There were many bizarre actions to the credit of boy Tolstoy. He always made a bid for personal attention. He once shaved off his eyebrows. He felt sure he could fly by sitting on his heels, holding fast his arms around his knees, and jumping off into space. And what was the consequence? He fell down eighteen feet below and was picked up unconscious.

After their grandmother's death in 1838, as a measure of economy, Nikolai and Sergei were kept at Moscow under the care of Aunt Alexandra for higher studies.

Leo was too young to enter the university. He was toying with the idea of a career. Aunt Pelageya put seeds of ambition in the young head. She encouraged him to be *aide-de-camp* to the Emperor.

Pelageya's house at Kazan was one of the social centres of the town and the Tolstoy boys got an opportunity to mix with men and women who mattered. In May 1844, he took the admission test. For his poor work in history, geography, statistics and Latin, he was refused admission. Later, not long after admission, his enthusiasm for university social life waned. He would cut lec-

tures, and in terminal examinations he showed poor results, so poor that he was not permitted by the university authorities to return. He transferred himself to the Faculty of Jurisprudence in 1845. This faculty was notorious for indiscipline and levity. He took a good deal of interest in criminal law. In the mid-year examinations, he showed poor results but did well in the finals and was promoted to the second year.

While in the university, he developed an analytical mind and grew critical of university, of the professors and of the accepted institutions, of Catherine's Nakas (a code of laws). In April 1847, he asked for permission to leave the university before taking the final examinations in the Faculty of Jurisprudence. His petition was granted. His Professor remarked, 'extremely poor'.

Leo had devoured French novels by Sue and Dumas, Sterne's *Sentimental Journey*, Dickens's *David Copperfield*, Gogol's *Dead Souls* and *Tales*, Turgenev's *Sportsman's Notebook*, Pushkin's *Eugene Onegin*, Schiller's *The Robbers*, etc. He read the complete works of Rousseau, and it was Rousseau who influenced his thought most.

At 23, Tolstoy had but scant success. He failed to secure a university degree, to improve the lot of his serfs, or to attain a good position in the army, civil service, or society. In April 1851, Tolstoy set out with his brother, Nikolai, for the wild, spectacular Caucasus that inspired Pushkin, Marinski and Lermontov.

Tolstoy continued his literary labours in the midst of warlike activities. After *Childhood* he worked on *Boyhood*.

On 18th February, 1854, Emperor Nicholas I died; his successor, Alexander II took the decision to continue war against England and France. In the battle of Inkerman, Russia lost ten thousand men. Tolstoy saw action at Sevastopol. He wrote war despatches. His three sketches made him famous. War, according to him, brought mutilation and death to man's soul.

For a brief period Tolstoy had served as an Inspector in a Petersburg Munitions Factory. He was on leave in Moscow. Turgenev, then the leader of the literary world of Russia, introduced Tolstoy to the literary set. From Moscow he hurried to Oryol where his brother Dmitri died of consumption. That pathetic scene was sketched by Tolstoy in describing the death of Nikolai Levin in *Anna Karenina*.

About the end of 1854, Tolstoy, then a Lieutenant, sent in his resignation from the army. He obtained his release about the end of 1856. His part in the Crimean War was a notable record. After the Sevastopol slaughter, he turned a pacifist. He came to live with Turgenev, who found young Tolstoy an impossible man.

Tolstoy returned to Yasnaya, sadder but wiser, then a 29-year old thinker. He felt for his sister Marya who had broken away from her husband. He wished to work and live for others, but spiritual gloom was beginning to come over him.

Early in 1861, Tolstoy went to London on an educational mission, heard a lecture by Dickens on education, a long speech by Prime Minister

Palmerston in the House of Commons, contacted Matthew Arnold (the famous Inspector of Schools), visited the Kensington Museum (the best institution of higher learning, according to Tolstoy), met Alexander Herzen, a Russian revolutionary in exile in London. From London he went to Brussels to meet Proudhon, a French Socialist in exile, whom he impressed greatly by his learning and intellect. Proudhon's book, *La Guerre et la Paix*, a work on the Law of War, had a good deal to do with Tolstoy's *War and Peace*.

His pedagogical tour brought him to Germany where he visited the kindergarten schools in Weimar and Gotha, but in them he saw nothing but "geometrical drawings and basketwork trifling."

In Berlin he met the novelist Berthold Auerbach, author of *Ein Neues Leben*, a novel of rural life, which he admired most. Auerbach gave him light, he wrote later. Auerbach on his part was impressed by Tolstoy's exalted nature. Some time in April 1861, he returned to Russia, and he never left his country for the remaining fifty years of his life.

Tolstoy gave his time and attention ungrudgingly to the education of peasant boys and girls. Education, in his view, was personal, not social. Education should help an individual develop his capacity to serve humanity and his desire for equality. He never paid heed to Macaulay and Hegel in the matter of education. In his Yasno-Polyana school the children were taught graded reading, grammar (not liked by Tolstoy), composition, penmanship, sacred history, Russian his-

tory, music, drawing, mathematics, natural sciences, religion. Freedom, not rigid discipline, was insisted upon.

Tolstoy was of the opinion that education pattern was determined by the conditions of the society. Over the door of Tolstoy's school was written in bold letters: "Enter and Leave Freely." He produced a school magazine and in trying to publicize his educational ideals, he invited a severe criticism which appeared in the pages of *The Contemporary*. He was attacked as an ignoramus in education and his school was condemned as "a gypsy encampment". His idea of freedom, the critics thought, bordered on anarchy and was a threat to the authority of the State.

In spite of his apparent failure, he, in later life, remembered his teaching experience at school as wonderful and exceedingly bright.

Tolstoy had great regard for manual labour. He thought it his religious duty to use hands for worldly goods. He did 'bread labour' himself. In this matter he greatly influenced Mahatma Gandhi as none else had done. Like Spinoza, he would say: "Use your head for heavenly thoughts, your hands for material goods."

It is clear that Tolstoy before his marriage was swaying between materialism and spiritualism and he lacked mental rest. Tolstoy was then thirty-four. His attention fell upon the Bers family residing within 25 miles from Tolstoy's countryhouse, and he yearned for family happiness. There were three Bers sisters in that noble house who were interested in painting, music and literature. Tolstoy paid se-

veral visits to the Bers family while in residence in Moscow.

For some time, he did not know which sister to choose. Finally, he fixed his choice upon the eighteen-year-old Sonya (Sofya Andreyevna) a rosy girl in the pink of health. On September 23, 1862, the marriage was solemnized.

Fancy, the bridegroom kept the bridal party, the guests and the priest waiting in the church! His valet arrived to say that his master had no clean shirt to wear, which was somehow procured.

A few months passed in full felicity. After the first flush of love and joy was over, they had a series of quarrels and reconciliations.

Tolstoy lived an honourable family life. He attained comparative peace and calm. No longer that tumult in his breast, no longer that frustration that seized him, no longer that vanity. He stopped working for his school and the school magazine. He was engaged in his creative literary work.

By September 1863, *War and Peace* absorbed his attention. He took five years (1864-1869) to complete this novel which was in fact the story of the struggle of nations, of their happiness and sorrow and humiliation. The characters were suggested by the people he knew in life.

The tremendous novel was a vast canvas on which was painted the panorama of life during the mighty struggle between Russia and France under Napoleon, "the Beast of Revelation". Vivid pictures are shown of the French army of four hundred thousand men being drawn farther and farther into Russia and of the Russian army refusing to be drawn into a major engagement; of Prince Andrei

wounded and bleeding, at last dying in the apartments of Natasha, the girl he loved best; of Pierre made captive by the French, marching over snow and slush with the spectre of the dying and dead fellow-prisoners, of rotting carcases of dogs and horses, having only platon Karataev to comfort him with smiles and stories and consolatory moral precepts, convincing him that "the God of that poor simple fellow Karataev was grander, more real and more true than the Architect of the Universe" known to the theologians; of Napoleon witnessing from the height of Semyonovskoye the smoke and horror of the battlefield strewn with thousands killed and wounded which rendered both victory and defeat a mockery and the whole struggle unmeaning: *War and Peace* presented Tolstoy's philosophy of history.

The significant events of history, in his view, depended not upon the will of any one man, Napoleon or Wellington, but were preordained. And Tolstoy argued that Generals, Kings and Emperors were but slaves of history.

On 20th March, 1873, Tolstoy began *Anna Karenina*. He took the cue for it from Pushkin's *Tales of Belkin*. In *Anna Karenina* as in *War and Peace*, he drew upon the stuff of life. Here he deals with the moral lapse of a lady married into high society. Anna falls from grace after eight years of married life, sacrificing all that is sacred for the sake of a man called Vronski and ends tragically by throwing herself under a running train, tortured by selfishness, jealousy and hate. Tolstoy knitted into the novel a parallel story of love between Kitty and

Levin. Tolstoy projected his own character into Levin, and that of his dead brother Dmitri into Levin's brother Nicolai. Scenes of Tolstoy's own life were transferred to the novel, and touched by his imagination, turned magnificent. As a work of art, *Anna Karenina* was a model of perfection and highly praised by Dostoyevsky. In this work of art, Tolstoy explored the mystery of human fate as never before and stated in an entrancing manner that man's happiness depended on the fixed laws of nature. It was completed in 1877, a lofty piece of work, though not so immense in scope as *War and Peace*, at once illustrative of Tolstoy's exquisite creative art and imaginative vision. His reputation as the greatest of Russian writers was established.

His other great works are: *The Cossacks* (1863), *My Confession* (1879-82), *The Power of Darkness* (1885), *The Kingdom of God Is Within You* (1893), *Resurrection* (1899).

Tolstoy's spiritual quest continued. He noticed that the Russian peasants had faith in God and felt that life was pleasant when he had faith in God and painful when he lost faith in God. He heard the promptings of his inner voice: "God is life. Live seeking God and then you will not live without God."

He observed the rites and rituals of the Orthodox Church but remained dissatisfied. The relation of man to God was the great problem of life, and that tortured him. His boldest utterances on the subject are to be found in his *Confession*. Tolstoy said in effect that man could gain morally by serving God and humanity.

In October 1879, he looked back over the past

fifty years of his life and made an entry in his diary: "There are worldly people, heavy and wingless. Their activity is on the ground. There are strong ones among them: Napoleon. They leave terrible traces among men and cause a commotion, but it is all on earth... There are those who have heavenly wings, and purposely—from love to men—descend to earth (folding their wings) and teach men to fly. When they are needed no more, they fly away: Christ."

Tolstoy at the age of 50 felt that his wife was estranged from him and his children indifferent to him. Rather unaccountable. Perhaps he was too great and grand for his family. At this stage Tolstoy questioned dogmatic theology, but he had new appreciation of 'Resist not him that is evil; and love your enemies.' He rose above spiritual suffering and felt happy.

The Tsar Alexander II was assassinated by the Russian Revolutionaries who were condemned to death. Tolstoy was against capital punishment. Urged by his new faith, 'resist not him that is evil,' he addressed a letter to Tsar Alexander III. The letter admitted the enormity of the assassination and quoting the passage from Matthew, 'Love your enemies', prayed to the Tsar to return good for evil. The letter was delivered to the Tsar through the help of Tolstoy's friend Strakhov, well-known in the literary circle, and Pobedonostsev who was a church dignitary and once the tutor of Alexander III. The Tsar rejected the proposal and all the six condemned criminals were executed.

Tolstoy read Dostoyevsky's *House of the Dead* and poured his praise over it. He had about

him all kinds of gospels in all possible languages. It appeared that he was turning from art to religion. He thought of the morally low as dark people.

Poverty, famine and squalor always drew Tolstoy's attention. Around 1881 Tolstoy chose to be a Census Officer to visit the slums of Moscow. He distributed money and drinks freely.

In 1886 he lost his four-year-old son, Alyosha; perhaps that was the third case of bereavement, having previously lost two other infants. He thought death was good and would unite him with those that had parted. In that very year he wrote *What Then Must We Do?* which carried his notions of the duty of women to bear and rear children.

The State and the Church went against Tolstoy because of his popularity and fame as an author and his charity towards the poor and suffering. The State feared that punishment given to Tolstoy would only serve to propagate his daring ideas.

In 1892 there was misery in Russia caused by famine. Tolstoy directed the work of relief at Begichevka. He set up 246 kitchens to feed 13,000 people daily and 124 kitchens to feed 3,000 children daily. A veritable Samaritan, he moved like a god among men.

In 1893 the Russian-English Literary Society elected him an honorary member of the Society. He felt pleased. In August that year Henry George sent him a collection of books and stories. Tolstoy was happy that there would be no private property in land but considered Henry George's idea of a single tax in land not quite satisfactory.

In 1896 the whole machinery of the State was down on the followers of Tolstoy. Four thousand of them were exiled and subjected to extreme torture and privation. Four hundred perished. Tolstoy raised a charity fund for them. Students dissatisfied with university authorities and their bureaucratic methods would come to Tolstoy for helpful intervention. Injustice anywhere touched him deeply: Turn to the subject of his *Resurrection* (1899); there also you find a moving tale of sorrow, actually a court case related to Tolstoy by a lawyer friend concerning an orphan girl seduced by a daring young man but abandoned to her fate when she was an expectant mother, later forced into the life of a fallen woman. Going deep into the novel, one finds a tense tug-of-war between the moralist and the artist in Tolstoy.

Like the fragrance of flowers, Tolstoy's fragrance spread far and wide. His writings inflamed the passions of Russians in their abject misery and suffering, and the Government banned his works. He came into conflict with every kind of authority, and he was excommunicated from the Church by the Holy Synod.

Tolstoy received no support from his family for his strange moral principles and religious views. A quarrel over the copyrights of his works increased the family tension. Critical attacks on his teachings also made him miserable. His peasant friend Novikov visited Yasnaya Polyana in October 1910. On the night of October 20, Tolstoy said to him: "...I'll not conceal from you the fact that in this house I'm roasted as though I were in hell. I've always thought and desired to go off somewhere—to

the woods, to a watchman's hut, or to some poor peasant in the village where we could help each other. . . ." He felt he was redundant in the house, and he decided to go away and save himself, not Leo Nikolayevich, but something more than Leo, something beyond Leo.

In his 83rd year, he left his home, came to visit Masha at Shamardino Convent. Sasha (Alexandra) was the only child who was interested in her father's spiritual strivings. She came to the Convent. From there Tolstoy moved south and arrived in Astapovo where he fell ill. His severe cold developed into pneumonia, and he was taken to a room in the stationmaster's house. His good and faithful friend Chertkov, and his sons and daughters came, and his wife too, though she remained a thing apart without letting him know of her presence. Half a dozen doctors were in attendance. The attention of the entire world press was focussed on obscure Astapovo. In his last moments Tolstoy tried to dictate something, but his utterances were inarticulate. Alexandra could hear only "To seek, always to seek".

After a few days of suffering, on November 7, 1910, came the end. His body was taken to Yasnaya Polyana. Thousands of peasants followed his coffin. They buried Tolstoy in the spot chosen by Tolstoy long ago where was hidden the green stick by his brother Nikolai, when a mere child, just in a playful mood. This green stick had a story of its own. It carried an inscription holding the secret that would bring about a Golden Age when all would be happy brothers and love one another.

BHAVAN'S BOOK UNIVERSITY

RUPEE SERIES

1. *Upanishads* by C. Rajagopalachari.
2. *How God Came into my Life (Series I)* by Several Contributors
3. *How God Came into my Life (Series II)* by Several Contributors
4. *Reverence for Life* by Dr. Albert Schweitzer
5. *Chinese Aggression and its Implications* by K. M. Munshi
6. *National Emergency and its Problems* by K. M. Munshi
7. *The Himalayas in Indian Life* by K. M. Panikkar
8. *Our Motherland* by Swami Vivekananda
9. *Gospel of Work* by Swami Rama Tirtha
10. *Bombay High Court : Half a Century of Reminiscences* by
K. M. Munshi
11. *Reason and Beyond Reason* by Sri Aurobindo
12. *Erase the Ego* by Sri Ramana Maharshi
13. *Our Duty* by Swami Chandrasekhara Bharati
14. *Answer to the Quest* by Ray Hauserman
15. *The Gospel of God-Realisation* by R. D. Ranade
16. *Sri Krishna* by Swami Sivananda
17. *Peace on Earth* by Pope John
18. *The Teaching of Sri Aurobindo* by M. P. Pandit
19. *Faith of a Poet* by Rabindranath Tagore
20. *Revolutionary Sarvodaya* by Acharya Vinoba Bhave
21. *The Message and Mission of India* by Sri Aurobindo
22. *What Life has taught me (Series I)* by Several Contributors
23. *What Life has taught me (Series II)* by Several Contributors
24. *The Pathless Path* by Swami Ramdas
25. *Tukaram's Teachings* by S. R. Sharma
26. *Pageant of Great Lives (Series I)* by Several Contributors
27. *Pageant of Great Lives (Series II)* by Several Contributors
28. *Pageant of Great Lives (Series III)* by Several Contributors

Available at all leading booksellers, railway bookstalls or :

BHARATIYA VIDYA BHAVAN,
BOMBAY 7 (INDIA)

BHARATIYA VIDYA BHAVAN

CONSTITUENT INSTITUTIONS

MUMBADEVI SANSKRIT MAHAVIDYALAYA

An Oriental College teaching Sanskrit and Shastras by traditional methods for Shastri and Acharya (recognised as equivalent to B.A. & M.A. respectively) and for Vachaspati (research).

SARAL SANSKRIT PARIKSHA VIBHAG

Department of Easy Sanskrit Examinations for Prarambh, Pravesh, Parichay and Kovid Examinations

UCHHATAR SANSKRIT PARIKSHA VIBHAG

Department of Higher Sanskrit Examinations for Praveshika, Purva Madhyama, Uttara Madhyama, Shastri, Acharya and Vachaspati Examinations.

GITA VIDYALAYA

An Academy for the study of Indian Culture with special reference to the Bhagavad Gita.

MUNGALAL GOENKA SAMSHODHAN MANDIR

A Post-graduate and Research Institute recognised by the University of Bombay coaching students for the degrees of M.A. and Ph.D.

BHARATIYA ITIHASA VIBHAG

One of the major schemes of the Bhavan is the publication of the HISTORY AND CULTURE OF THE INDIAN PEOPLE in 10 volumes. So far seven volumes have been published viz., (1) The Vedic Age (2) The Age of Imperial Unity (3) Classical Age (4) The Age of Imperial Kanauj (5) The Struggle for Empire (6) The Delhi Sultanate and (7) British Paramountcy and Indian Renaissance. The remaining volumes will follow at an interval of 8-10 months. This is considered to be the first successful attempt at re-writing the History of India by her own sons on a very exhaustive basis.

MUNSHI SARASWATI MANDIR

An Institute of Culture with a Library consisting of over 65,000 volumes including many Indological volumes, Museum consisting of old and valuable palm leaf manuscripts, coins, paintings etc.

VALLABHJI RAMJI BALPUSTAKALAYA

A Library for Children with facilities for indoor games, educational films etc.

BHARATIYA KALA KENDRA

The Kala Kendra is devoted to the development of Drama, Dance and Music. The Kala Kendra produces dramas and dance ballets in English as well as in Hindi, Gujarati and Marathi to encourage amateur talents. An Inter-Collegiate Dramatic competition, in several languages, is also sponsored by it every year for the same purpose. Ideal facilities for these activities are provided in the Bhavan's auditorium—the Kanji Khetsey Sabhagriha.

BHARATIYA SANGIT SHIKSHAPITH

An Academy of Indian Classical Music, affiliated to the Bhatkhande Sangit Vidya-pith, Lucknow, which is recognised by the Central Government for courses leading to the Bachelor of Music Degree.

BHARATIYA NARTAN SHIKSHAPITH

An Academy of Dance for teaching the four systems of Indian dancing, viz., Manipuri, Kathak, Kathakali and Bharata Natyam.

BOOK UNIVERSITY

Publishes books, ancient and modern, at low price (Rs. 2.50 each) to make available the best literature and classics of India and the world to the common man in an easily understandable form. So far 115 titles have been published and over 10,00,000 copies have in all been sold. Some of the books have also been published in Hindi, Marathi, Bengali and Tamil. A new one-rupee Series has also been started.

Prakashan Mandir

Apart from our HISTORY and BOOK UNIVERSITY SERIES, this department also publishes the results of the research and other activities of the various Mandirs of the Bhavan and books of cultural value. Its publications include:

Bharatiya Vidya Series: Critical editions of texts, translations and original works of research in Indology—in Sanskrit and English. Published volumes 22.

Shugbi Jain Series: Critical editions of ancient works and manuscripts connected with Jain religion and literature. Published volumes 52.

The Glory that was Gurjaradesa: A comprehensive study of Gujarat in 7 volumes. Published volumes 2.

Munshi Sahitya: Social novels, historical plays, biographical works of Munshiji and Smt. Lilavati Munshi in Gujarati and English, the copyright whereof has been kindly gifted by them to the Bhavan. Published volumes 80.

JOURNALS

Bharatiya Vidya: An Indological research quarterly in English started in 1943. Published volumes 22.

Bhavan's Journal: An English Fortnightly devoted to life, literature and culture started in August 1954. Present circulation 50,000 copies. Annual Subscription Rs. 6.50.

Bharati: A Hindi Fortnightly started in August 1956. Annual Subscription Rs. 6.50.
Samarpan: A Gujarati Fortnightly started in November 1959. Annual Subscription Rs. 6.50.

DEPARTMENT OF PRINTING

Bhavan's press where all its publications and periodicals are printed and where practical training in printing is given to the students of the Bhavan's College of Journalism, Advertising and Printing.

COLLEGE OF JOURNALISM, ADVERTISING & PRINTING

An Institution for providing systematic instruction in Journalism, Advertising, Sales Promotion, Public Relations and Printing.

M. M. COLLEGE OF ARTS & N. M. INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE

The College was opened by Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel in June 1946. It is affiliated to the Bombay University for courses of studies leading to B.A., B.Sc., M.A., M.Sc., and Ph.D. degrees.

BHAVAN'S COLLEGE OF ARTS & SCIENCE, DAKOR

The College was opened by Dr. Jivraj Mehta, Chief Minister, Gujarat, in June 1962. It is affiliated to the Gujarat University for courses of studies leading to B.A. & B.Sc. degrees.

SARDAR PATEL COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING

The College was opened in June 1962 for courses of studies leading to B.E. (Civil, Mechanical and Electrical) degree. It is affiliated to the Bombay University.

BHAVAN'S SCHOOL, NEW DELHI

The School coaches students for the Cambridge School Leaving Examination, the medium of instruction being English. Sanskrit and Hindi are compulsory subjects. Music, Indian dancing and painting are also taught to the students.

BHAVAN'S ACADEMY OF LANGUAGES, NEW DELHI AND BOMBAY

The Academy teaches four foreign languages, viz., German, Russian, French and Spanish.

MUNGALAL GOENKA SANSKRIT TRUST

The income from this Trust goes to support the Post-graduate and Research Department of the Bhavan.

ASSOCIATED BODIES

Sanskrit Vishva Parishad, Bharatiya Stree Seva Sangh, Bombay Astrological Society,

ABOUT THIS BOOK

In this book are presented short accounts of the lives and teachings of some of the prophets, seers and thinkers of the world who appeared at various times to guide mankind in the adventure of the Spirit. They are drawn from all countries and through all times. Each of them was a Master Mind of uncommon rate who brought a new vision to bear on the problems of life, revolutionised the thoughts and actions of their contemporaries and blazed a new trail for posterity. Individually and collectively, they are standing witnesses to the eternal glory of God and to the greatness of man who is only an abridgement of the Divine. Some of these like Zarathustra, Christ, the Buddha and Mahavira were founders of new religions, while others like Sankara, Desika, Ramakrishna and Vivekananda gave fresh life to old faiths. Chhatrapati Shivaji established a Dharma Rajya recalling the Rama Rajya of other times. The intellectuals who thought in a great way are represented by Socrates and Emerson while Mrs. Annie Besant and Sarojini Devi are outstanding women whose noble lives must be an inspiration for ever.

The contributors to this and to its companion volumes have written with the authority of their scholarship and with discernment and sympathy. It is hoped that marching with their pageant, the reader will be inclined to a more intimate study of these great lives.